FINAL REPORT

STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC RESOURCES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL THROUGH ACTIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: LESSONS LEARNED AND WAY FORWARD

GHANA ANTI-CORRUPTION COALITION

SEPTEMBER 2019

PREPARED BY

Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition with funding support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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GACC is extremely grateful for the support of members of the Local Accountability Networks (LANets), especially the Focal persons. We appreciate their immense contribution in promoting transparency and accountability at the local level.

We are also grateful to the management of the 12 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) where the project operated, specifically Ashanti region (Asante Akim Central, Ejisu Municipal Assembly, Mampong Municipal Assembly and Atwima Nwabiagya District Assembly), Brong Ahafo region (Berekum Municipal Assembly, Kintampo South District, Sunyani Municipal and Techiman Municipal Assembly) and Northern region (West Gonja Municipal Assembly, Sagnarigu District Assembly, Savelugu Municipal and Tamale Metropolitan Assembly).

We also acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and contribution of all the staff of GACC in ensuring effective implementation of this project, which has yielded remarkable results.
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# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDD</td>
<td>Ghana Centre for Democratic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>District Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DACF</td>
<td>District Assembly Common Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>GACC</td>
<td>Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGF</td>
<td>Internally-Generated Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANet</td>
<td>Local Accountability Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLGRD</td>
<td>Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMDA</td>
<td>Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTDP</td>
<td>Medium Term Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSIWA</td>
<td>Open Society Initiative for West Africa</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Studies on the civil society in Ghana have shown lack of capacity to monitor and assess local government services and expenditure, limited capacity to engage the local government structures and high levels of mistrust between CSOs and the District Assemblies. This had led to limited citizen participation in local governance and culminated in abuse of power, misuse of resources and poor public service delivery at the local level.

The Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), with funding support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), implemented a social accountability project aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in local governance. The project, “Strengthening Accountability and Transparency in the Utilization of Public Resources at the Local Level Through Active Citizen Participation to Enhance Quality Service Delivery and Development”, was implemented between January 2017 and June 2019. Twelve (12) Local Accountability Networks (LANets) in six (6) Regions were supported to hold their District Assemblies (DAs) accountable for better development results. They focused on how the DAs implemented their Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), specifically the 2017 and 2018 Annual Action Plans in the areas of Health and Education service delivery. The GACC sought to do this through capacity development for the LANets, creating and promoting local level accountability platforms, and creating and maintaining learning platforms for the LANets.

The project's successes are seen in the increased participation of citizens in local governance by monitoring service delivery and follow-up interface and accountability forums which allowed
for citizens to demand answers from duty-bearers, especially on Health and Education. The project also increased dialogue and consensus building through platforms that allowed for officials in the project districts to account to their constituents. This led to significant percentage increases in local revenue mobilization in some districts. Also the project increased the delivery of health and education projects and services in the project districts.

The project observed several challenges in service delivery foremost of which are the disbursement of District Assembly Common Fund (DACF), difficulty in accessing for engagement the service providers in construction projects, and lack of local project ownership. However, GACC also learned the importance of social media, and other learning platforms in providing real-time guidance and answers to CSOs and citizens. GACC recommends that other organizations who seek to undertake such a project, study and improve on GACC's model, create platforms for effective District Assembly-CSO engagement, and court the support of the District Assemblies for effective implementation and results.
Capacity development of the actors on the demand side of local governance is important to ensure and enhance transparency and accountability at the local level. Civil society needs to be empowered so that they can effectively participate in the local governance processes.

Various studies have shown that even though the Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 936) makes provision for CSOs to take active part in local governance, civil society is unable to make significant inputs because they lack the capacity to meaningfully assess and monitor local government expenditure and quality of services delivered. Studies have pointed to limited capacity to engage local governance structures, limited understanding of the local governance system, budgeting, policies and policy analysis, and a high level of mistrust between the CSOs and the local government authorities. The mistrust is fed by CSOs perception of Assemblies as operating in silos whilst the District Assemblies also do not acknowledge the role of the CSOs in local development.

Limited citizens' participation has led to information asymmetry in local governance, culminating in abuse of power, misuse of public resources and poor development at the local level. Representatives of the people such as Elected Assembly members are also not performing effectively due to capacity challenges and therefore not making meaningful contributions into the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects and social services delivery at the local level.
Acknowledging all these challenges, GACC sought to facilitate platforms for effective engagement between CSOs and the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). The project used Social Accountability tools – community score cards and public expenditure tracking surveys – to track and monitor developmental projects and public funds used in the implementation of selected Health and Education projects and programmes contained in the 2017 and 2018 annual action plans of MMDAs.

GACC supported 12 citizen platforms known as Local Accountability Networks (LANets). LANets consist of recognized CBOs and local CSOs, traditional rulers, youth groups, women groups, trades associations, People with Disability groups and opinion leaders. The Networks were supported in 12 Districts in three zones (Ashanti, Bono-Ahafo and Northern zones) in Ghana with funding from OSIWA, to champion accountability campaigns at the local level by enhancing local service delivery through a much more informed and engaged citizenry. The LANETs used Social Accountability tools to monitor selected service areas (health and education) in their respective districts.

The Project also promoted local level accountability platforms for MMDAs to account for utilized public resources and to facilitate wider dissemination of the issues through radio and social media campaigns.

The project's main activities were:

1) Training workshops to build the capacity of the LANets.
2) Establishment of baseline indicators of projects to be monitored/tracked in 12 districts
3) Periodic monitoring/tracking of the quality of service delivery and public funds used in the implementation of health and education projects
4) Regular interface meetings with local government officials
5) Periodic radio sensitization and community interface meetings

2.1 INCEPTION MEETINGS

The project began with inception meetings with the Local Accountability Networks (LANets). The inception meetings also involved visits to engage the offices of the relevant supply side stakeholders – MMDAs, Health Directorate and Education Directorate – at the various implementation districts. Inception meetings were also held with identified radio stations within the districts who would serve as the project's media partners. The visits were meant to broach the project to the stakeholders, and secure their buy-in and ownership through the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). The inception meetings were successfully implemented with all twelve District Assemblies and six radio stations signing the MOUs.
The GACC in partnership with the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and SEND-Ghana organized a capacity building workshop for the LANets to equip them with the social accountability tools and tracking skills. Officials of SEND-Ghana and CDD-Ghana were invited to train the GACC implementation team on the use of social accountability tools, and public expenditure tracking skills in a training of trainers sessions. SEND Ghana and CDD-Ghana have years of experience in using social accountability tools to track budget expenditure.

The trained GACC staff, in turn, built the capacity of 24 persons from 12 LANets. The presentations focused on Social Accountability, the Community Scorecard, Monitoring of Physical Projects, the District Assembly System & Planning in the Assembly, and Public Expenditure Tracking. An official from the Ashanti Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) was brought in to train the LANets on Ghana's Local Governance System and opportunities for Civil Society engagement within the system. GACC ensured that participants at the training workshops got hands-on experience in using social accountability tools by focusing on practical sessions during the training. This design ensured that participants' capacities were built to use the tools to hold their leaders accountable with little supervision. In all, twenty-four (24) LANet members were trained: six (6) females and eighteen (18) males – two of whom were Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).
GACC supported the LANets to establish baseline indicators of projects and services to be monitored in the 12 districts. To encourage ownership of the project, LANets were made to choose the projects to be monitored from their Assembly's annual action plans with inputs from Assembly officials. This was done because the project had been pitched to Assemblies as part of efforts to support their own monitoring activities. LANets were also supported to develop action plans. The action plans consisted of the projects and services to be monitored, their location, the status of these projects and services, and comments on progress of work. This was part of the preparatory activities undertaken to build the capacity of the LANets before the actual fieldwork began.

The LANets undertook five out of the planned six quarterly monitoring visits to project and service sites under the health and education sub-themes within their respective districts. The number of monitoring visits was reduced when the project's monitoring and evaluation arm established that the pace of work on physical projects was relatively slower than the regularity of monitoring. This meant that regular monitoring was unlikely to see any changes in physical projects in particular from one quarter to another. This lesson was incorporated into the project, leading to a reduction in the number of monitoring visits undertaken.
In all, thirty (30) projects were monitored, 17 in health and 13 in education. Information and issues that arose from the monitoring visits were documented and discussed first with the Health and Education directorate offices in the districts.

These directorates were able to offer further information on the projects and provided much needed context to understand the projects. For instance, at Mampong in the Ashanti Region, the Health Directorate revealed that one of the hospital projects stood the risk of being non-operational after completion. This was due to the fact that the ancillary services such as water and power were not available at that site. The Assembly had also failed to consult the Directorate before commencement of the project. As such, the Directorate had been unable to budget for medical facilities to resource the place at completion.

The Health Directorate however had appealed to the chiefs and citizens of the communities that the facility will be serving to raise funds to help resource the place at completion. The LANets were also able to use this information to query the Mampong Municipal Assembly, who later responded that the plan had been varied to cater for utilities – power and water.

The next stakeholder interface meeting was held with their MMDAs. Some of the findings were also discussed in the annual Accountability Forums facilitated between the citizens and the District Assembly.
After each round of monitoring visits, GACC together with the LANets and the citizenry engaged the District Assembly officials at the interface meeting. In all, five rounds of interface meetings were conducted in each of the twelve project districts. The interface meetings were an opportunity for the LANets to present their findings from monitoring visits to health and education project sites and service providers, for feedback from their MMDAs. This activity created a platform for collaboration and interaction between the citizens and duty-bearers, and also encouraged citizens to participate in the decision-making process. The interface meetings enjoyed massive participation from citizenry, including traditional authority (chiefs) and community representatives at the District Assembly.
In one such round of interface meetings (the fourth round), in nine of the twelve districts, about 196 community members and eleven (11) Traditional Authorities (chiefs) and their entourage were present at the meeting. This was because the project had created a lot of interest and communities became eager to participate and have their voices heard by their MMDAs.

The interface meetings also became popular among District Assembly officials as it offered them a platform, which was hitherto unavailable, to engage directly with citizens in communities where the Assembly was carrying out projects and to learn first-hand from citizenry their views on the projects being undertaken. District Assembly officials usually present were mostly Planning Officers, Budget and Finance officers, Coordinating Directors, District Chief Executives, and officials from the District Health and Education offices. The duty bearers were present to answer questions, provide details on the projects and receive citizens' input on projects monitored by the LANets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Citizens Disaggregated by Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Members</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Authority</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly Men and Women</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Summary of Citizen Participation in the Fourth Round of Interface Meetings*
### Table 2: Summary of Duty-bearers engaged in the Fourth Round of Interface Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>District Assembly</th>
<th>Health Office</th>
<th>Education Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Officials Engaged</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interface meetings also enjoyed huge support among the community members. A project evaluation found out – through post-meeting interviews – that about 91% of citizens showed satisfaction with the interface meetings.

*Figure 2: Level of Citizen Satisfaction with Interface Meetings*

The evaluation also showed that community members perceived largely that their concerns were satisfactorily answered at the interface meetings. In the diagram below, 73% of participants at interface meetings were satisfied with the feedback given on their queries.

*Figure 3: Level of Citizen Satisfaction with Feedback at interface meetings*
Two annual accountability forums were held in all twelve project districts. The annual accountability forums allowed for Assembly officials to speak to their constituents on the utilization of the district annual action plans and composite budget, as well as submit recommendations into the MMDAs' medium term development plan. The officials took advantage of the accountability forums to also push for citizens to make more input into local governance by playing their roles, especially in the payment of their tolls and rates. At each accountability forum, there were upwards of 100 citizens present. Others were reached in real time with live radio broadcasts and radio call-in sessions. GACC also provided social media support to the accountability forum through live tweets, broadcasting the salient issues being discussed. The use of radio broadcast and social media was a novelty that brought in audiences from within the districts and beyond. The success of these two virtual platforms has more than convinced project implementers to adopt them in subsequent projects. The MMDA officials were also visibly impressed by the questions and comments from these virtual audiences and decided to adopt this method for their own future sessions.
As part of each accountability forum, GACC printed and distributed simplified copies of the Assembly's Annual Action Plan, especially the health and education sections as they were of direct interest to the project. Citizens therefore easily engaged with their Assembly officials based on the information on the printed annual action plans. Posters were also printed, distributed and pasted at vantage areas in the district in order to make the accountability forum popular and garner citizen interest.

GACC undertook mid-term and end-of-project evaluations. The mid-term evaluation exercise was undertaken in ten (10) out of the twelve (12) project districts. The exercise involved
in-person, in-depth interviews with all they key stakeholders of the project – citizen groups (Local Accountability Networks), local government (Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies), Education Directorates and Health Directorates – in every district using a semi-structured tool (questionnaire).

Following from the mid-term evaluation, GACC organized a mid-project learning and sharing workshop where the results of the evaluation were disseminated to all focal organizations and discussed, and the learning used to shape program implementation, especially the fourth and fifth monitoring and interface meeting rounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Region/District</th>
<th>LANet (Citizens’ Group)</th>
<th>MMDA (Local Gov’t)</th>
<th>Education Directorate</th>
<th>Health Directorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Asante Akim Central</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ejsiu</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mampong</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Atwima Nwabiyaga</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Berekum</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kintampo South</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sunyani</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Techiman</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Damongo</td>
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<td>Savelugu</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
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Table 3: Table on Stakeholders interviewed during the Monitoring Process

Legend: x: Interview happened  - : Interview could not take place
NA: Non-Applicable; thematic area selected makes this stakeholder irrelevant
At the close of the project, GACC undertook an end-of-project evaluation to assess the project relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. A purely qualitative approach was adopted for the evaluation which involved experiential sharing by project direct targets. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews were employed in collecting data. Cluster and simple random sampling procedures were used to select 6 districts (out of the total 12 Districts) and 6 communities (1 beneficiary community in each of the 6 selected districts) for the evaluation. Respondents included health and education service providers, community members and District Assembly (DA) officials. The evaluation revealed that communities applied the knowledge gained from the Social Accountability concept to institutional accountability measures in their communities. An end-of-project learning and sharing workshop was organized to close out the project. Outcomes and lessons learned were shared and documented.

### 3.0 Project Results

The project's overall goal was to improve local level service delivery and development through active citizens' participation in local governance. In order to achieve this overall goal, GACC envisioned three outcomes:

1. Increased participation of citizens in tracking quality of service delivery and public funds used in the implementation of health and education projects.
2. Increased dialogue and consensus building as well as information sharing among District Assemblies and citizens.
3. Increased capacity of citizens at the community level to demand quality health and education services and hold duty bearers accountable

The project's results will be discussed under these three themes.

3.1 INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN TRACKING QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION PROJECTS

A key outcome of this Project is increased citizen involvement in local governance. LANet monitoring and follow-up activities in the district, and the information provided by these activities, compelled some District Assembly officials to open up to citizen participation. The focal person of the Berekum Municipal LANet, for example, was invited to be a member of the Assembly's Entity Tender Committee. Hitherto, no representative of Civil Society had been made a member of the committee. In November 2018, 2 LANet members were also made a part of the Savelugu Hospital Oversight Management Committee which is responsible for overseeing the activities of the hospital. This was as a result of the LANet's monitoring and advocacy work in the health sector.

The most notable achievement under this outcome area however is the increasing number of citizens that began to participate in the Assembly interface sessions and Accountability Forums. The numbers began to increase significantly especially at the fourth monitoring and engagement session. The invitation of citizens to the forums through radio broadcast and social media was also a novelty that produced tremendous results.
3.2 INCREASED DIALOGUE AND CONSENSUS BUILDING AS WELL AS INFORMATION SHARING AMONG DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES AND CITIZENS

Platforms such as the Interface meetings (which later became Community Interface Meetings) and the Accountability Forums gave the District Assembly officials in the project districts the opportunity to account to their constituents and also remind citizens of their duty to pay their rates and tolls. The platforms yielded fruits in this regard as some districts recorded an increase in revenue generation. For example, the Planning Officer of the Kintampo South District (in the Bono-Ahafo zone) revealed that LANet activities in the district have contributed to an increase in the Assembly's internally generated funds (IGF) mobilization from GHC 257,968.00 in 2017 to 328,172.87 in 2018. This represented a 27% increase on the previous year's revenue. The Budget Officer of the Mampong Municipal Assembly also revealed at the Community Interface Meetings that LANet activities at Kofiase had led to a 1.7% increase in the Assembly's IGF mobilization during the period.

3.3 INCREASED CAPACITY OF CITIZENS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL TO DEMAND QUALITY HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES AND HOLD DUTY BEARERS ACCOUNTABLE

One of the major results of this project is the improvement in the delivery of health and education projects and services. After conducting a mid-project evaluation, GACC learnt to monitor not only the delivery of physical projects, but usage of the projects that were delivered. All the project districts benefited immensely from the work of the LANets in monitoring physical projects, tracking the delivery of services and providing
feedback to duty-bearers, as well as demanding better service. The list of areas that benefited from the project is provided below;

Due to the monitoring and advocacy work of the Ejisu LANet, the Ejisu Municipal Assembly changed the source of funding of a 6-unit classroom block from the District Assembly Common Fund – which was disbursed erratically – to the more reliable District Development Fund, to allow for construction of the block to make significant progress. This move was confirmed by the Assembly's Planning Officers at the fourth round of the District Interface meetings between the Assembly, the LANets and beneficiaries (including traditional authority) from the community where the project was sited. Notably, Ejisu Municipal LANet monitored the delivery of a 6-unit classroom block with ancillary facilities including an ICT laboratory. At the start of the LANet's activities, construction of the 6-unit classroom block had stalled since its start in 2015 because its source of funding, the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF), was not being disbursed adequately or consistently, preventing the Assembly from spending on all projects.
LANET MONITORING TEAM STANDING AT THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED FUMESUA SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

DEPUTY PLANNING OFFICER OF THE EJISU MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY PROVIDING INFORMATION AT THE INTERFACE MEETING
Through the intervention of LANet activities, two Community Health Posts (CHPS) compounds, at Chirehin and Weila are at 80% and 90% completion, respectively. At the beginning of the project in 2016, the projects had been abandoned at 40% and 50% stages respectively. The delivery of the projects was positively affected by LANet's interface meetings. In close collaboration with the LANets, the chiefs and people of the communities exerted pressure on the Assembly which led to their project being prioritized.

A 3-unit classroom block at Apaaso has also been successfully completed and handed over to the school for utilization through the intervention of the LANet.
A school project that was abandoned at 60% completion since 2015 saw work resume by the instruction of the Assembly, as a result of constant monitoring by the LANet in that area. This was announced formally at the last round of interface meetings and confirmed by the monitoring undertaken by the LANets. A Community Primary school and a Health Centre were also completed at Nkwaeso and Aworopataa, respectively.
The Sunyani Municipal LANet promoted the effective delivery of health projects in their municipality through its monitoring. The Assembly was pushed to honour its debt to a contractor working on a maternity block, allowing the construction to resume. Also, due to the LANet's work, a mental health block that was abandoned at the window level was re-awarded to a contractor in March 2019. The project has since reached the roofing level.

Five schools in the district which lacked student writing desks received 250 dual desks in February 2019. This happened after the Savelugu LANet monitored those education projects and revealed the lack of furniture. Their engagements with the Assembly led to the education projects being captured in the Assembly's budget.
4.0 CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The project faced some challenges during its implementation. These challenges were identified in evaluation exercises undertaken as part of project implementation. The challenges were, as far as practicable, tackled with practical and pragmatic approaches aimed at ensuring that the project met its goals.

4.1 CHALLENGES

IRREGULAR DISBURSEMENT OF DISTRICT ASSEMBLY COMMON FUND (DACF)

Initially, GACC proposed for the LANets to implement the monitoring of projects and services every quarter. This was done in order for the monitoring to coincide with the release of DACF for development at the district level. However the DACF was disbursed irregularly, which meant that the LANets were unable to observe changes in monitored projects and service delivery in a consistent manner. In order to ensure the project could properly monitor projects and services, GACC spaced out the monitoring visits to happen on a half-year basis in order to allow enough time for DACF releases and work on the monitored projects to happen.

DIFFICULTY IN ACCESSING SERVICE PROVIDERS

In some districts, the LANets initially found it difficult accessing some of the service providers on the physical projects being constructed. For example, most LANets faced difficulties accessing the contractors working on the health and education projects being monitored. In order to solve this problem, LANet
focal persons first paid unofficial visits to the project sites, to seek buy-in from the contractors for the project. This initiative led to better communication and access to the contractors eventually. The contractors became willing to engage, especially when they saw LANets advocating for them to get paid so they could progress with work.

**OWNERSHIP OF PROJECT**

It was found that the LANets showed more ownership of the project than any of the other district-level stakeholders, such as the DA Administration, the Health and Education Directorates. During the evaluation LANets demonstrated the deepest understanding of the project as against the three other stakeholders. In order to resolve this problem, the LANets made conscious efforts to regularly engage with the service providers, as well as invite them to project-related meetings. This helped ensure that the stakeholders were always in the loop with regards to the project.

**4.2 LESSONS LEARNED**

GACC made the project as iterative as possible, and so where challenges were faced, lessons learnt were immediately used in project implementation. Some of the lessons however stand out.

**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM**

A WhatsApp platform was created to allow LANets to share challenges and lessons, and communicate important information in real time. This lesson was learned from a
research project GACC implemented. In that research, GACC had to coordinate the activities of about thirty-four field officers and answer their questions in real-time. The WhatsApp platform that was created ensured that the field officers could learn from each other as well as gain responses to pressing questions in real-time. GACC carried that lesson it learnt to this project to ensure that information flowed easily from GACC to project partners and vice versa.

**USE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**

GACC knew the only way to successfully implement the project was to gain the support of the other key stakeholders including the DA Administration, and the Health and Education units. To gain this support, GACC signed MOUs with all the key stakeholders. The MOUs delineated the roles of both GACC and the stakeholders. Stakeholders were allowed to modify the MOUs to the extent that was fair to all parties. Thus, all the Assemblies in whose jurisdiction the project was implemented signed MOUs. This secured the project the needed official support and cemented its place within the district.

**REGULAR LEARNING AND SHARING PLATFORMS**

Another lesson GACC learnt was to have regular face-to-face sessions. These sessions allowed for partners, in mid and end-of-project evaluations, to regularly evaluate project implementation and make suitable adjustments.

**5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

GACC implemented the project for a two-and-a-half-year period from January 2017 to June 2019. After surmounting
challenges and learning valuable lessons, GACC makes the following recommendations;

A) BUILD ON THE PROJECT

GACC recommends a scale-up of the project using the model it has created. GACC created a united CSO front in the districts through its LANet platform, having trained and guided them to independently select projects to monitor. GACC also facilitated platforms that enabled citizens to engage with their duty-bearers. This model led to significant successes in local revenue generation, as well as the delivery of local health and education projects and services. GACC is of the view that when this model is scaled up to cover a lot more districts, even greater results will be achieved. It is also recommended that the project is sustained in the target districts to give it some continuity, solidify the gains made and create even wider impact.

B) CREATE PLATFORMS FOR CITIZENS TO ENGAGE

A major discovery GACC made was that both citizens and duty-bearers were eager to engage each other. The missing element was the platform that would make possible the engagement. Therefore, the interface and accountability forum platforms came in handy as it allowed for regular engagement between the citizens and their duty-bearers. The zeal to engage is alive and present in both parties. There is therefore the opportunity for accountability-oriented CSOs to fill that space by creating the platform to facilitate engagement.
C) CREATION OF CSO PLATFORM AT THE DISTRICT LEVELS

In program implementation, GACC came across several local level CSOs and CBOs within the target districts working in numerous thematic areas, sometimes overlapping each other and duplicating efforts. This presented a disorganized front that made it impossible for them to work with the local governance structures or to present a united front for impact. GACC recommends the creation of CSO platforms at the district levels. The platforms will bring together a number of CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to present a united front in a particular thematic area and make significant impact, as has been done at the national level for the Sustainable Development Goals.

D) GET ASSEMBLY BUY-IN

GACC recommends securing the buy-in of the District Assembly officials to ensure successful project implementation. GACC secured the buy-in of the District Assembly officials by signing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the target districts. The MOUs spelled out each party's responsibility and rights. This gave the project a legitimacy with duty-bearers that ensured smooth engagement. One other proven method is to get an introductory letter from the Social Accountability Unit of the Ministry of Local Government. Even this introduction is best secured at the district with an MOU.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Ghana's efforts at realizing sustainable development through a decentralization of government functions at the centre culminated in the passage of the Local Government Act (Act
462). The law made room for civil society participation in the local government process of the country. GACC with funding support from OSIWA sought to build on the advantages held by the local CSOs and CBOs to increase transparency and accountability in local governance by supporting 12 Local Accountability Networks (LANets) in 6 regions. The project had demonstrated that with capacity building interventions and creation of platform for engagements, the goals of good governance can be achieved. The achievements that were observed in the project included: Increased participation of citizens in local governance; increased dialogue and consensus-building; and increased delivery in health and education services in the districts.

Project initiatives such as implemented by GACC in partnership with OSIWA have the potential for scaling-up, a model that can be built on rather than going through a “re-invention of the wheel” that can waste time and resources. The lessons and recommendations from this report should be disseminated to critical stakeholders such as the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), DAs, CSOs and CBOs at grassroots level, providing guidance on how societal need for service delivery can be better addressed.
DISCLAIMER:

Even though the publication of this report is funded by OSIWA, the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition is solely responsible for the content of this report.