

MISSION REPORT



December
2016

The Hunger Project Ghana

Report about visit of The Hunger Project Ghana by Anne-Céline
Bonnier in December 2016.

Mission Report

THE HUNGER PROJECT GHANA

INTRODUCTION

The Hunger Project is committed to the sustainable end of hunger. The Hunger Project Switzerland (THP CH), which is part of the worldwide The Hunger Project network, is certified by ZEWO. This means, that THP CH has to select, control and evaluate its own projects in the programme countries.

In 2016, THP CH has decided to start funding projects of The Hunger Project Ghana. Thereupon, THP CH mandated Anne-Céline Bonnier to carry out a mission in Ghana during the period of 4th – 9th December 2016 in order to evaluate the possibilities for collaboration. The mission was very well prepared by the local THP team in Accra.

The objectives of this mission were:

- Get insight into the ongoing activities of THP Ghana, learn about their achievements and difficulties
- Define potential areas of collaboration between THP CH and THP Ghana
- Establish contact between ZEWO and THP Ghana and the Soroptimist club and THP Ghana.

THP GHANA

The office of THP Ghana is situated in Accra. I have been welcomed by the team, who presented me THP Ghana and the programmes. THP Ghana has been set up in 1996 and started with the programmes in 1998. There are now 45 epicentres in Ghana, in 5 regions in the South. Most epicentres are in the Eastern region due to a large scale up in 2006. 3 of these epicentres have reached self-reliance by December 2016. One of the main challenges of THP Ghana is the high amount of epicentres that need to be brought to self-reliance in a difficult financial context, where staff must be reduced and the financing for the epicentres is not secured. The altering equipment like cars (e.g. the car I used is 16 years old) also induces high maintenance costs.

We discussed about the fundraising challenges in Switzerland and what is important for an efficient collaboration in the future.

The THP Ghana team is very motivated and professional. They are very engaged in their mission. I especially appreciated their forward looking way of handling and developing the programmes. While discussing with the team I could feel the Hunger Project principles and strategy in action.

Meet Janet, Micro Finance Officer in this [video](#)

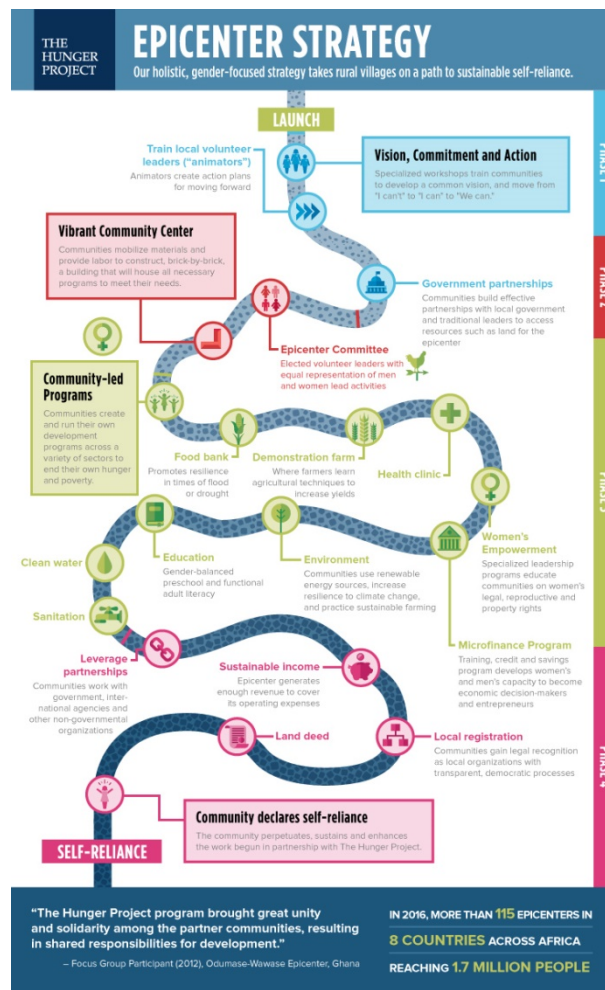
MEETINGS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

We met with the representative of the SECO in Accra. We presented the action of The Hunger Project in Ghana and discussed about a possible collaboration. Our areas of work are quite different but we identified a possible area of collaboration in the development financial mobile service and our microfinance programme. THP Ghana and THP CH will monitor the requests for proposal of the SECO in this area.

We also met with the committee members of the Soroptimist network (of which THP CH director is a member) in Accra to discuss potential areas of collaboration.

VISITED PROGRAMMES

While in Ghana I visited 3 epicentres: Matsekope, Nkawanda and Atuobikrom. The epicentre Matsekope is in phase 4, Nkawanda is in phase ... and Atuobikrom declared self-reliance in December 2015.



Matsekope Epicenter

The Matsekope epicentre consists of 12 villages (7 055 women and 6 692 men) in the district of Ada West. The project started in 2001. There are 276 animators, they are volunteers that engage themselves along with The Hunger Project (THP) to train and inform the community members and to develop their environment.

I visited the Matsekope Epicenter on Tuesday, the 6th of December 2016. More than 70 people were waiting for me in the main room of the Epicenter, even though Tuesday is market day and an important day for revenue generation. The epicentre committee was there, Lawrence, its chairperson welcomed me. 4 chiefs and members of chief's families were also present at the meeting. THP Ghana Field Officer made the translation for me.



Achievements / Benefits of THP

The Matsekope epicentre is in phase 4 and is due to be declared self-reliant in 2017. The community is especially strong in the microfinance programme. During the meeting, the participants have mentioned following benefits:

- Possibility to develop source of income (e.g. Joshua could expand his land) and to create new sources of revenue (e.g. production of soaps).
- Knowledge about handling business efficiently has increased e.g. sensitization to keeping record and monitoring business activity.
- Possibility to pre finance agricultural activity thanks to the microfinance programme. Less dependence on third party buying the production under-priced.
- More security concerning the future thanks to savings.
- Change of mentality through trainings and exchange between the community members, among other things:
 - Increased awareness about HIV and child pregnancy with reduced incidence.
 - Increased awareness about the importance of education of children.
- Recognition of the importance of women in the development of the communities.
- Strong cooperation between the members of the different villages: more strength to achieve their vision and go on after self-reliance.
- Visibility of the epicenter: the epicenter has been contacted by a company from the Netherlands for business.
- Confidence in the capacities to continue without the Hunger Project.

Lydia, chair of the microfinance programme: “I know that THP has a future for us, for me, participating is a necessity.”

Esther, microfinance group leader, knows that the information she receives at the meetings will help her improve her life and the life of her family.

Challenges / concerns of the community

The main concern of the community is the bank and assuring that the money will not be taken from them after self-reliance. There have been quite a few scandals about microfinance institutions in 2016 that have unsettled the people. Samuel, director of THP Ghana, explained to them that with the system of the credit union, the risk is reduced to a minimum as all the people using the bank are also stakeholders. He also informed them that THP Ghana is working on the possibility to create a network of the epicentre credit unions with common governance.

Another concern is the connection to electricity of the nurse house. The discussions with the institution take time and the nurses do not want to live there as long as the electricity is not available.

They also mentioned that they still need to develop activities to finance the epicentre such as renting a tractor.

Overall impression of the visit

My overall impression of the visit to Matsekope is very good. I have appreciated that they have been very open and transparent about their challenges. I have been impressed by their strength and will commit to their vision and I am sure that they will manage very well and go forward after self-reliance.

Nkawanda Epicentre

The Nkawanda epicentre consists of 9 villages (4 740 women and 3 818 men) in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The project started in 2006. There are 448 animators, they are volunteers that engage themselves along with The Hunger Project (THP) to train and inform the community members and to develop their environment.

I only made a short visit to Nkawanda epicentre. It was late and the epicentre was empty apart from Comfiance, the Hebame (?), who is living at the epicentre. Comfiance mentioned that it is for many the only health center around and that more women can now profit from pregnancy health service.



The epicentre is situated on the main road between Accra and Kumasi, the second biggest city in Ghana. The villages of the epicentre have no drinking water so the epicentre has installed a water pump which is very easy to use.

Opposite the epicentre there is, at the border of the road, a selling shed of the epicentre to sell the pottery of the epicentre. The epicentre offers pottery courses.

Atuobikrom Epicentre

The Atuobikrom epicentre consists of 11 villages (4 045 women and 3 189 men) in the Kwahu South district in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The project started in 2001. There are 471 animators,

I visited the Matsekope epicentre on Friday, the 8th of December 2016. About 30 people were attending the meeting including the members of the epicentre committee and the chief of one of the village who is a member of the epicentre and microfinance committee. THP Ghana Field Officer made the translation for me.



Achievements / Benefits of THP

The Atuobikrom epicentre has been declared self-reliant in December 2015. It celebrated self-reliance in July. The committee is very active and has started several projects since self-reliance e.g. solar powered equipment for the health centre, ICT centres for the children, water tank. The projects are taking place in the main village where the epicentre building is but also in the other village attached to the epicentre. As we mentioned our concerns regarding so many ongoing projects, Timothy, a committee member, informed about the remaining steps and about the plans they have to bring the projects to an end. They have successfully some funding applications by NGOs to finance the projects. To finance the activities of the epicentre, there is an agro shop selling agricultural products.

During the meeting they mentioned that the learnings they got from THP were very important and valuable. They are still applying them every day. Working together was the main success factor for them reaching self-reliance.

In the future they plan to further projects to continue develop their communities. They also plan to expand the health centre and receive government accreditation.



Challenges / concerns of the community

The committee members were very confident in their capacity to further develop the epicentre. Securing funding for the epicentre projects is their main challenge.

Overall impression of the visit

My overall impression of the visit to Atuobikrom is also very good. The epicentre was very well maintained and the many projects going on have shown me that the epicentre strategy does reach sustainable results, not only on paper. I have been very impressed by their energy. Their pride about what they have achieved is a great strength and helps them going forward. Even more than in Matsekope I could witness the disappearing barriers between men and women as the village chief stood behind the president of the epicentre committee (a woman) for me to take a photo of the epicentre committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

My visit to Ghana has confirmed the pertinence of the THP strategy and the results of the epicentre strategy. It has also shown the importance of getting the epicentre to self-reliance.

The visited communities benefited from the learnings they made with the THP programmes: structure, project management skills, production skills, business management skills. They also benefited from the microfinance programme that helped them being more independent and have a better planning. With the Hunger Project, they came together and are now part from a greater network within Ghana and the world. It keeps their motivation high.

THP Ghana team is doing a great job in accompanying the epicentre communities and developing the programmes according to the learnings and the changing environment.

After discussion with the country director of THP Ghana, I recommend to following projects / equipment for funding: self-reliance evaluations, scale up of RAFIP Programme (computerization of the credit unions), funding epicentres to self-reliance, cars.

I would like to thank THP Ghana team for their most valuable support and efficient preparation of my mission.