

# Oxfam's women advancement project successful

By Juliet Akyaa Safo

A five-year project aimed at addressing structural and systematic barriers to women's economic empowerment has made great strides in four regions of the country.

The Women's Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation (WEACT) project, focused on women working in agriculture and informal economy of the shea and cocoa sectors in the Upper West, Upper East, Northern and Western regions.

One hundred and twenty six Legal Literacy Volunteers (LLVs)

trained under the project worked to return lands to widows, secured child support and stopped eight forced marriages.

They also referred four cases of gender based violence to law enforcement agencies, increased legal knowledge and supported women to claim their rights.

Additionally, the LLVs raised awareness about women's rights, family law, inheritance law, and children's rights among 15,000 community members, comprising 8,820 women, 3,150 men, 1,638 girls and 1,638 boys.

The project was funded by Global Affairs Canada through Oxfam-Québec under its Innovation for Women's Economic Empowerment in Ghana (IWEEG) programme. It was on the theme

"Sustaining women's economic empowerment for inclusive growth".

At an event to close out the project, in Accra, the Country Director of OXFAM, Mohammed-Anwar Sadat Adam, revealed that over 30,000 people have accessed legal right information through an interactive voice messaging platform with tool-free line set up under the project.

He said about 85 per cent of women also know how to claim their rights through informal channels, such as traditional and religious leaders, while 63 per cent know how to claim their rights through institutions like the legal system.

## Gender Model Family

Mr Adam, added that 540

couples enrolled into the Gender Model Family, one of the initiatives under the project, have reported recognition, redistribution, and reduction in unpaid care work at the household level.

He said women have reduced their work hours from 46 hours to about 20 hours a week.

The Country Director said men have also accepted their role in the families and taken more household responsibility increasing from 14 hours to about 18 hours a week.

## Leadership skills

Mr Adam added that through a Land Social Lab approach, women in the project area, now have access to land tenure and documentation for the two value chain.

He said the above successes

have increased women's readiness to acquire land, with several others already initiating the land registration process.

The Director Head of Corporation at the Canadian High Commission, Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah, thanked participants and partners for ensuring the successful implementation of the project.

She urged the beneficiaries to be creative and continue finding solutions to grow their business.

She also urged them to continue the advocacy on the rights of women in communities.

## Commendation

The Deputy Director of the Department of Gender of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Vera Karikari, said the WEACT project has paved the way for economic empowerment particularly at the grassroots.

She called on stakeholders to work together in building a world where everyone had the opportunity to realise their full economic potential.

The Director of the Women in Agriculture of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Paulina Addy also commended the Canadian government for their budgetary support and strategic direction.

She also thanked OXFAM for implementing and championing the quest towards women empowerment to transform lives and push forward the national development agenda.



• Project leaders at one of the exhibition stands for the training