



2023 IN REVIEW: OUR IMPACT



Participatory Development
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PDA Ghana



PDA TV

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About PDA

Participatory Development Associates (PDA) is a social development and consultancy organization in Ghana that supports development processes at community, district, national, regional, and institutional levels towards creating a fairer world where all citizens can reach their full potential. PDA achieves this through empowerment, service delivery, capacity building, and research in communities and with organizations to advance collective objectives of equitable access to socioeconomic opportunities for all. PDA is based in Ghana and for over 20 years, has worked across multiple African countries including Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Cameroon, Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya, to undertake development research, assessments, and impact evaluations. These undertakings have generated quality evidence that has strengthened development practice, program design, and policymaking.

We work with government, non-government and private organisations, as well as multilateral and bilateral organisations, in areas such as research, monitoring and evaluation, policy analysis and advocacy, local economic development, education, agribusiness, child labor and remediation, financial inclusion (VSLAs & Cooperatives), gender, and development. PDA uses innovative participatory methodologies to facilitate a bottom-up development process in communities, with a proven track record in research, M&E, and the design and implementation of projects at national and sub-national levels.

We have worked in a wide range of areas in development including:

- Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (REL)
- Longitudinal learning & Impact partnerships
- Local economic development – education, healthcare, agriculture and decentralization
- Financial Inclusion (VSLAs and Cooperatives)
- Women, youth and economic empowerment
- Policy analysis and advocacy
- Poverty and social assessments
- Child and Social Protection – child labor and remediation; safeguarding
- Literacy programmes
- Reproductive health
- Gender and development
- Strategic planning

PDA is based in Ghana, with two main offices in Accra and Kumasi.



Our Vision

Our vision is of a world where states, communities and organisations provide an enabling environment in which all people, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, creed, age or disability, can realise their full potential and contribute their best to the common good.



Our Core Values

We care about:

- **Empowerment:** We believe in balance of power – gender, race, age, class. We work to strengthen capacities and give equal opportunity to all.
- **Inclusiveness:** We believe everyone has an active role to play in realising social change. Together we are more and we achieve more.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** We believe we attain resilience and self-reliance by recognising opportunity, adapting and breaking new ground.
- **Quality:** We do what we say we will do, maintaining and improving standards.
- **Efficiency:** We strive to make judicious use of resources, including time.
- **Effectiveness and Impact:** We strive to excel, exceed expectations and leave a lasting effect.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** We value openness, the building of trust, and being accountable to ourselves, our partners and our clients



Our Units

PDA offers its services along the following Units:



PDA Africa: Responsible for the co-creation and design of community-led and community-driven development interventions with governments, the private sector and international development partners.



PDA Research, Evaluation & Learning: Support development partners to design robust data and evidence management systems to monitor the impact of their projects at international, national and sub-national levels



PDA Communications & Advocacy: Use generated evidence to facilitate decision-making through advocacy at national and sub-national levels.



PDA Agri-Industry and Social Enterprise (PASE)



PDA Support Services (PSS)



PDA Finance & Administration

A Message from the Managing Director

Dear Partners and Colleagues,

I believe that 2023 will be a benchmark year in the annals of PDA. The loss of our dear deputy Managing Director, Helen Nti, in June 2023 kickstarted a difficult season for us as staff and as an organization.

Helen was an integral part of all our work and relationships, and we will forever hold her in our hearts. We are committed to retaining her legacy as we push forward in our work across and beyond Ghana.

As we look back on the year, we cannot help but be grateful to every single one of our partners for standing with us through the challenging time. Your consolations, gifts, fond memories and encouraging messages were precious reminders that her work in the development space was not in vain. Beyond that, your patience and understanding as we all adjusted to the new normal has been phenomenal. As we enter 2024, we say, "**Thank you!**"

At the beginning of 2023, the theme for our staff retreat was "The PDA We Want to See: A Productive Workforce for Growth and Expanding Frontiers." I extend my personal gratitude to PDA's Board of Directors and all our staff members for giving their all and rallying together to play their roles in our rapidly-evolving organization. I am a firsthand witness to the tireless efforts we invested in various skill areas to prove that we are all still committed to the growth and expansion of PDA, first by growing our personal and professional skills as individuals and then delivering excellent results to our clients, partners, beneficiaries, and the general public.



Edem Agbe
Managing Director, PDA



I am proud to say that we are, indeed, still growing. Reflecting on our work in 2023 (as you will see in the coming pages), it is obvious that each unit/team is solidifying its purpose within the overall PDA vision, and all our activities, projects and investments are aligned with the strategic themes we introduced for this period. The necessary restructuring of some of our internal systems and procedures are poised to enhance our effectiveness and efficiency as an organization, and in coming months, we will be announcing the key changes that will matter to you.

We enter 2024 excited about our upcoming projects. We invite the deepening of bonds, the building of stronger partnerships, and the co-creation of more impactful programmes. We encourage you to see for yourselves the increasing expertise and experience of our staff, as well as our renewed dedication to the delivery of excellent service across-board.

We are grateful for your continued support and collaboration. You are the reason why we do what we do, and we appreciate your trust and confidence in us. We hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter and learning more about our work and impact. Please feel free to share your feedback, suggestions, or questions with us. You can also visit our website or follow us on our social media pages to stay updated on our latest news and events.

In loving memory of Helen, yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edem Agbe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edem" and the last name "Agbe" connected by a single stroke.

2023 in Review:

PDA Research, Evaluation & Learning (REL)

The REL Unit is a knowledge production hub of PDA with specializations in research & monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) consulting in Ghana and the broader sub-Saharan African region. Using innovative participatory methodologies to facilitate development process in communities – through research, MEL & organizational development -- the REL team has significant expertise in researching and evaluating social phenomena within Ghana and the broader sub-Saharan Africa region.



The Unit's portfolio encompasses applied research, impact evaluations, and the analysis of project implementation, relevance, and sustainability across community, national, and regional contexts. We have applied both experimental and non-experimental approaches, combining both quantitative and qualitative (and participatory) techniques to holistically assess and analyze all facets of projects for both programmatic and policy uptake. The Unit also continues to participate actively in developing proposals in search of new business opportunities.

CDD “I Am Aware” (IAA) Project Summative Evaluation

Client: Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)

Team: Alexander Afram; Raymond Hodor

Status: Complete

About the Project: The citizenry-led initiative sought to empower ordinary citizens to hold duty-bearers accountable for the delivery of public goods and services. To achieve this, citizens were provided with prompt, user-friendly, and easily-accessible information to guide their demands for improved and quality public goods and services from duty-

bearers at the district and community level. The initiative was executed in three phases and across 20 districts.

PDA provided monitoring and evaluation technical support for the 3rd phase of the initiative, which included monitoring activities, SAG assessment and the evaluation/monitoring of significant stories.

Qualitative data collection approaches were largely used to gather data for monitoring, assessment and evaluation activities. An in-depth semi-structured interview approach



was adopted to engage key project staff of IAA partners and duty-bearers who have been engaged so far on the project. Focus group discussions were used to gather data from SAG members both at the district and community levels. Using the interpretive paradigm study design, qualitative interviews were used to gather data from SAG members for the SAG assessment. The validation/evaluation

of significant stories adopted a casual conversation interview approach to collect data during the process of authenticating stories. Various Means of Verifications (MoVs) were inspected as part of the authentication process. These included but were not limited to relevant photos, data and in-person visitation of sites related to the stories.

Round 5 of Tony's Chocolonely Living Standards and Welfare Survey

Client: Tony's Chocolonely

Team: Alexander Afram; Raymond Hodor

Status: Complete

About the Project: The survey aims to provide Tony's Chocolonely with reliable data on the standard of living and poverty levels of farmers in their cocoa value chain.

PDA has been a long-term research partner undertaking a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)/Living Standards and Welfare Survey (LSWS) data collection exercise

among the Client's partner cooperatives in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. The annual data collection has been happening since 2019 and in September this year, the REL team worked on the fifth round.

PDA programmed the questionnaire (CAPI design) for electronic data collection in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, trained enumerators, and pretested the survey tool. The team also managed the quantitative database and processed the data, using Stata for analysis.





Impact Partner Organization for Young Africa Works in Ghana

Client: Mastercard Foundation

Team: Alexander Afram; Raymond Hodor;

Lucy Ofori-Davis

Status: Ongoing

About the Project: PDA's team of evaluators and data analysts provide technical support to the Mastercard Foundation in the implementation of the Young Africa Works in Ghana, an initiative that is focused on providing economic opportunities and well-being for young people in Ghana and Africa.

The PDA team designed an evaluation and assessment matrix to monitor and measure the impact of the work of the Mastercard Foundation in Ghana. The following are the specific activities under this project in 2023:

- *Outcome Baseline Activities*

PDA conducted a nationwide baseline data collection, analyzed the data, and produced an Outcomes Baseline report. The team presented the findings of the baseline assessment at the Foundation's Ghana Sensemaking Workshop. In September, PDA collaborated with the Foundation's Ghana Impact team to organise a Partner Impact Convening, bringing together all partners of the Mastercard Foundation in Ghana to share findings of the baseline assessment. The Convening was also used to discuss modalities and the way forward for impact monitoring of projects under the Young Africa Works program. PDA produced a comprehensive report after the Convening, covering the implications of the baseline findings for implementing partners and the approach for impact monitoring.

**- *Young Impact Associates Program Activities***

In July 2023, PDA led in organizing a maiden graduation ceremony for Cohort 1 of the Young Impact Associates (YIA) program in Ghana. The YIAs received one year of intense practical and theoretical training in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) led by PDA and the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) in partnership with the Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum (GMEF). The YIA program is part of the Foundation's strategy to develop young African evaluators to lead evaluations on the continent and contribute to the MEL debate and knowledge production.

In August 2023, PDA and SDD-UBIDS undertook a first screening of applications for the second cohort of the YIA program and handed over the list to the Foundation for further processing and direction.



Impact Monitoring Activities

Currently, PDA is working with the Foundation's Impact and IMAR teams to implement the first round of impact monitoring in Ghana. The PDA team has developed a monitoring approach and held discussions with the Impact team to align our approaches. In November 2023, we held enumerator training for 120 field researchers for data collection to commence. However, due to unexpected delays in receiving finalised data collection scripts from a partner managing the database, we had to postpone the data collection to 2024. We are currently awaiting new direction and or timelines for the implementation of the impact monitoring data collection in 2024.

Organisational Needs Assessment and Capacity Development

Client: A Rocha Ghana

Team: Arnold Bediako; Ernest Adu Owusu

Status: Ongoing

About the Project: PDA is providing organizational development training to strengthen the capacities of nine partner organizations (NGOs and CBOs) in the Northern, Eastern, and Greater Accra regions, as part of their three-year project, "Strengthen the Roots". This is to support their quest to combat the exploitation of natural reserves.

PDA has successfully conducted organizational capacity and needs assessments of the various organizations and has submitted the final report to the Client. Following the needs assessment report, the team developed training modules and facilitated training sessions for the nine organizations according to the areas of greatest need identified in the needs assessment report.





Evaluation of CASA-TAF's Inclusive Aggregator Model in Ghana

Client: Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusinesses (CASA) by TechnoServe on their Technical Assistance Facility (TAF)

Team: Arnold Bediako; Ernest Adu Owusu

Status: Ongoing

About the Project: CASA-TAF is working with an agriculture technology service provider, Farmerline, to support agribusinesses in Ghana. The goal of the project is to develop a network of small and medium aggregators in the soybean, maize, and cashew value chains that can provide end-to-end services, including input provision, advisory services, and

crop off-taking. This forms part of a five-year program focused on changing how investors perceive and invest in agribusinesses operating in supply chains with smallholder producers.

PDA's role in the project is to conduct an evaluation (comprising baseline, midline, and endline evaluations) over a period of two years for this aggregator project in the maize, soya, and cashew value chains in the Northern, Upper West, Bono, Bono East, and Ahafo regions. PDA is currently in the inception phase of the project.

2023 in Review:

Cocoa Communities' Library Project

Partner: Magic Libraries Foundation

Team: Victoria Ampiah

Status: Ongoing



About the Project

The Cocoa Communities' Library Project (CCLP) is a transformative 2-year initiative aimed at complementing efforts by government and other stakeholders to improve reading literacy among children in ten cocoa growing communities in the Ahafo Ano South East and Ahafo Ano South West districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Specifically, the project purposes to ignite reading interest among children and build a culture of reading among target communities

to prevent them from dropping out of school. Additionally, the CCLP aims at encouraging local communities, the Ghana Education Service, and other relevant stakeholders to support activities geared towards improving reading literacy among children. The project targets one thousand children with 5000 books in Asuadei, Biemso No.1, Potrikrom, Kunso, Asempaneye, Barniekrom, Abesewa, Boatengkrom, Dunyan Nkwanta and Mankranso.

Under the project, two community libraries have been renovated, furnished, and stocked with age-appropriate reading books from Ghanaian and African writers. Eight communities which did not have a physical library have been given mobile libraries referred to as 'Library in a Box'. Each of these contains a variety of children's books so that children can have easy access to books during their weekly reading sessions in school and community level. To sustain reading interest among children, reading competitions are organized twice a year to encourage children to read while celebrating the progress and impact the initiative is making in the lives of children and beneficiary communities.

Key Project Activities

The Cocoa Communities Library Project (CCLP) was launched on 26th July 2023 at Adugyama in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The launch was well-attended by about one hundred guests including local authorities, representatives from the two district education offices and district assemblies, community members, patrons of the reading clubs and children from schools within target districts. District Directors of Education and Representatives from the district assemblies were excited about the initiative and pledged their support for the implementation and sustainability of the project.





After the project's launch, patrons in all ten communities were supported to form reading clubs in their various communities. The reading club is open to children in the communities from Primary One to Junior High School level. All the libraries -- both physical and "Library in a Box" -- are running with the active participation of an average of 40 children for each reading session. Each community reading club is expected to meet once a week; however, due to the increasing numbers of reading club membership, some reading clubs meet between one to three times a week. Again, to ensure efficient management of the reading clubs, some patrons have created smaller groups of readers.

A total of 2533 books from Ghanaian and other African writers have been purchased and distributed to ten community reading clubs. About 90% of the books are based on stories from Ghana and other African countries. The remaining 10% are stories from other continents. The stories are mainly moral lesson-based stories, folktales, fiction, cultural stories and a few mystery and history books. All the books were produced by publishing firms located in Ghana. The two renovated cluster community libraries each received 403 books. The remaining 8 communities each received 215 different books. Cluster libraries are also accessible to all the communities with a 'Library in a Box' within the same cluster.



On the 11th and 12th of October 2023, a cluster-level reading competition was organized for schools in the ten communities. Each cluster (consisting of 5 schools) held their competition separately in their respective district capitals. The cluster-level Reading Competition is designed to help build a reading culture among children by encouraging reading for pleasure, reading diversely, and reading for cognitive development. All ten schools from target communities participated in the cluster level reading competition. Each school presented four contestants from Primary Four to Primary Six. The first two schools from each cluster competition met on 5th December 2023 to compete for the reading championship position for the year 2023. This event was dubbed the Annual Reading Festival.

The Annual Reading Festival was attended by about 100 patrons, pupils, teachers, headteachers and personnel from the district education offices in the target district. This event was designed to provide reading club members from across the districts with a clear, attainable goal to work towards that would help them improve their literacy skills and reflect on their progress. Again, it was designed so that pupil-supporters and attendees from non-competing schools would equally benefit from seeing their peers succeed whilst demonstrating a passion and aptitude for reading.

Before the competition, three books were distributed to the competing schools for contestants to study. The books were 'Abu Goes to School', 'The Sick Village', and 'Ananse and the Magic Drum'. These texts were selected because of their challenging language, substantial length, and positive moral messages. While each story addressed a very different theme subject, all three were didactic, and all written by Ghanaian authors.

At the end of the contest, Mankrano D/A Primary 'B' emerged the Reading Champion for 2023 with a score of 96 out of 100. They were seconded by Barniekrom with a score of 86 out of 100. Contestants

were commended by the audience and dignitaries present. Each school received a citation to acknowledge their dedication and contribution towards improving reading literacy in the district. Each contestant also received a certificate of participation and gift package for their efforts and commitment to improving their reading abilities. The district directors of education were pleased with the progress and impact the project has made within the short period of its implementation. They reiterated their support for the project and pledged to contribute to the continuous success and sustainability of the project.



2023 in Review:

PDA Africa (Community-Driven Development)

In 2023, PDA's work has also focused on community mobilization, sensitization and facilitation, as well as project management, smallholder farmer capacity building, and financial inclusion. PDA has a proven track record of partnering with communities and other development organizations to implement large-scale development

interventions in promoting ethical and transparent commodity supply chains and communities over the last 21 years. The team is made up of experienced community facilitators, child labor and protection experts, field trainers, evaluators, and associates with several years of practice in the field.



PDA adopts a unique integrated VSLA (VSLA+) model as a self-facilitated platform to plug in sustainable development interventions. Our diverse

and customizable VSLA+ modules and components allow for specific interventions to be co-designed with our partners for the greatest impact in target communities.

VSLA+ Modules & Components



VSLA-CHILD Project (Ghana)

The VSLA-CHILD Project is a child labour remediation initiative that aims to tackle child labour in cocoa-producing communities through a community-driven approach. The project sought to increase the access of 2500 farmers to microcredit, improve their savings culture and income diversity, as well as support the farming households to develop self-help measures to protect children and remediate child labour using bottom-up approaches. The project was implemented between 2019 – 2022. Training for endline data collection for the project was done at

Santasi on 18th and 19th January 2023. 3 PDA field officers and 6 PDA associates were trained in addition to 5 CLMT officers from Beyond Beans. 3 teams were deployed for the data collection at Samreboi, Konongo/Juaso and Bekwai/Nsokote. The field officers did a mop up after the one-week intensive data collection. The field officers who were trained from Beyond Beans collected the data from the Kookoo Pa operational areas. The project impact report was submitted in June 2023.

Accessible Soils and Sustainable Environments (ASASE) Project (Ghana)

The VSLA-CHILD methodology is a child labour remediation initiative that tackles child labour in cocoa-producing communities using a community-driven approach. The implementation of the methodology is the 6th intervention under the Accessible Soils and Sustainable Environments (ASASE) initiative, which offers a holistic approach to supporting



farmers, communities, and forest remnants in the landscape. The integration of the VSLA-CHILD methodology into the ASASE project aimed to tackle the intersectional nature of climate change, poverty, and gender.

2400 farmers were expected to have increased access to microcredit, improve their savings culture and income diversity, as well as be supported as farming households to develop self-help measures to protect children and remediate child labour using bottom-up approaches. 6 PDA field officers were responsible for the formation and training of the VSLA groups.



Eighty (80) VSLA groups were formed with 2064 members. 1163 (56%) of the members were females while 901 (44%) of the members were males. On average, there were 25 members per VSLA group. Out of the 80 groups formed, 35 had a full membership of 30 while the remaining groups had less than 30 members. Even though the target number of groups (80) was achieved, the project did not reach the target of 2400 farmers since not all the groups had 30 members.

In 2023, the VSLA groups under the project had weekly meetings to purchase shares, grant loans, repay loans and continued their Gender Action and Learning Systems (GALS) and child labour training until their share-out. After share-out, the groups were supported to begin their second cycles of operation.

Supervision and monitoring of the VSLA groups under the project was handed to field officers from Beyond Beans in June 2023. A learning workshop for the project was organized on 16th November 2023 at the Kumasi office of Beyond Beans to share lessons learned from the project.



ECOM NCP VSLA GALS Project (Ghana)

The ECOM NCP VSLA-GALS project is a financial inclusion and gender empowerment project which is aimed at building the economic and social capacities of cocoa farmers in selected communities in the Eastern and Central Regions of Ghana through Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups. The project is being implemented by Participatory Development Associates (PDA) in partnership with Nestle Cocoa Plan (NCP) and ECOM. The project methodology incorporated Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) into VSLAs with the overall objective of improving savings culture, access to micro-credit, and increasing income, wellbeing and gender justice in household decision making.

40 VSLA groups have been formed by four PDA field officers in four cocoa districts. The training of GALS champions for the VSLA groups has been completed, and the GALS training in all the VSLA groups has also been completed. Currently, the VSLA groups meet to purchase shares and repay their loans.

**NEW ECOM VSLA GALS Project (Ghana)**

The VSLA-GALS project is a financial inclusion and gender empowerment project which is aimed at building the economic and social capacities of cocoa farmers in selected communities in the Eastern, Central, Ashanti, Western North and Oti Region of Ghana through Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups. The project is being implemented by Participatory Development Associates (PDA) in partnership with Lindt & Sprüngli Farming Program and ECOM.



The project methodology incorporated Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) into VSLAs with the overall objective to improve savings culture, access to micro-credit, and increase income, wellbeing and gender justice in household decision making. 50 VSLA groups are expected to be formed in 6 cocoa districts. So far, 40 VSLA groups have been formed in four cocoa districts. Community entry for the formation of VSLA groups under the project started on 25th September 2023. The 40 groups meet weekly to save, with some of them granting loans to their group members.

VSLA GALS + ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (Ghana)

The Women's Empowerment, Access to Finance and Income Generation in Ghana project is aimed at addressing the primary challenges facing the cocoa sector in Ghana including low income, low productivity, lack of access to financial services and low financial literacy -- which are all some of the root causes of child labour. The primary target of the project is women in the cocoa-growing communities from which SUCDEN sources cocoa.

The main objectives of the project include:

1. Improving access to finance through the establishment of VSLAs
2. Strengthening gender relations in communities at the household level through joint financial planning, as well as at the community level through increased participation in governance structures

3. Improving women's earning capacity in cocoa communities to boost household income.
4. Improving the nutrition of households in target communities
5. Contributing to a holistic improvement of the welfare of farming households in order to safeguard against potential child labour infractions.



The project is being implemented in the Akontombra, Fosukrom and Adabokrom cocoa districts in the Western North region of Ghana. The project is being implemented by PDA in partnership with Sucden and Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Union (KKFU). 10 VSLA groups are expected to be formed under the project.

The community entry and sensitization for the project was done from 2nd –6th November 2023. 9 VSLA groups have been trained by 2 PDA field officers under the project to start purchasing shares.

VSLA-CHILD (Cote D'Ivoire)

The VSLA-CHILD project in Ivory Coast is a financial inclusion and child labour remediation scheme that aims to improve savings culture, provide access to micro-credit, increase gender awareness, and provide a platform for child labour sensitization. Participatory Development Associates (PDA) in partnership with Beyond Beans implemented this project with the farmers of two (2) cooperatives in San Pedro and Daloa (Cote D'Ivoire). The project was implemented in the following communities: Zaguieta, Bonon, Zorofla, Adamakro, Issakakro, Yaokro, Kouamekro, Kouadiokro and Lozokro.

25 VSLA groups were expected to be formed under the project. 29 groups were formed; however, 2 of the groups were dissolved at Zorofla due to poor attendance.

Between January to February 2023, the VSLA groups under the project had their share-outs for the first cycle. PDA and Beyond Beans officers visited the VSLA groups for PDA to hand over the management and supervision of the groups to Beyond Beans from 27th February to 3rd March 2023.

**INCOME ACCELERATOR PROGRAM (IAP) (Cote D'Ivoire)**

PDA, in partnership with Beyond Beans, was expected to form 58 VSLA groups using the VSLA-CHILD Methodology as part of Nestlé's Income Accelerator Program (IAP) in Ivory Coast. An agreement was reached for 17 new groups to be formed in addition to the initial 58 groups as part of the program. The program is being implemented with farmers from two farmer cooperatives, namely Spad Gagnoa (Gagnoa) and SCOOPABL (Blé). 7 PDA field officers are working on the project.



77 VSLA groups have been formed under the project. GALS champions from the 17 new groups were trained from 3rd – 7th April 2023. In 2023, the VSLA groups under the project carried out their GALS training during their usual weekly meetings to purchase shares, grant loans and repay their loans.

58 of the groups had their share-outs from 31st July to 5th August 2023. 2 of the 17 new groups had their share-out on 20th December 2023, and the remaining groups will have their share-out in January 2024.

ENROUTE Project (Cote D'Ivoire)

The Enroute Project seeks to identify the most cost-effective ways to support farmers to earn a living income. The project is testing three interventions:

1. Only cash transfer
2. Cash transfer and services
3. Only services

Under these three interventions, PDA is working with selected household members from the cash transfer only group, to train them on Participatory Action Learning modules dubbed Empowering Better Decisions. PDA is also implementing the VSLA-CHILD methodology for the remaining two groups of intervention areas. 2 PDA field officers are working on the project.



Empowering Better Decisions (EBD) is a methodology which was co-created by PDA and Beyond Beans to enable farmers to plan through cooperation for improved living conditions for the household. It is made up of four carefully selected Participatory Action Learning (PAL) modules and is expected to cause immediate and long-term change in the mindset of the participants.

VSLA-CHILD is a child labour remediation initiative that aims to tackle child labour in cocoa-producing communities through a community-driven approach. It also seeks to increase farmers' access to microcredit, improve their savings culture and income diversity, as well as increase their gender awareness and sensitivity. The methodology builds on the Village Savings and Loans Associations and Gender Action Learning System (VSLA-GALS) approach, an initiative that employs participatory techniques to sensitize participants

on gender issues and to increase their financial literacy, among others. The VSLA-CHILD methodology integrates a child labour remediation component into the VSLA-GALS approach and adopts participatory techniques in sensitising farmers on child labour issues.

The project was started in March 2023, and 25 VSLA groups have been formed after community entry and sensitization. At APM Man, 8 EBD groups were formed in 4 communities and in APM Daloa, 6 EBD groups were formed in 4 communities. A total of 362 participants were trained using the EBD methodology.



50 representatives from the 25 VSLA groups were trained as GALS and child labour champions from 17th July to 21st July at Man and Daloa. The groups are currently carrying out their GALS and child labour trainings during their weekly meetings.

The VSLA and EBD groups were visited for monitoring between 22nd July to 29th July to observe their meeting and record-keeping procedures, and also to encourage group members to participate actively in the GALS training at the community level. For the EBD groups, the monitoring visit was to get feedback from the training participants on the training and understand why some group members absented themselves from the training.

Apart from the VSLA group in Montagne, all other VSLA groups and EBD Groups were visited.

Nyonkopa Child Labour Remediation Project

Partner: Nyonkopa Cocoa

Team Lead: Kamil Abdul Salam

Status: Completed

The Nyonkopa Child Labor Remediation Project is an intervention which directly targeted child labor cases within the value chain of Nyonkopa Cocoa. The project started in February 2021 and covered six administrative sectors of Nyonkopa Cocoa, a cocoa buying company in Ghana. The project aimed to address child labor cases within its cocoa value chain by providing direct remediation interventions for the affected children and their communities, as well as building sustainable community structures to prevent and combat child labor in the long term.

Between 2022 and 2023, the project provided remediation interventions for 3,758 children found in child labor and hazardous labor practices, as well as their families and communities in over 400 communities across 28 districts in 6 sectors of Ghana. The 6 project sectors included Asante Bekwai, Oda, Assin Fosu, Juaboso, Dunkwa Goaso, and Kasapin. The project reached 2,462 households across the sectors.



Participatory Development Associates was the sole implementing partner for this intervention. The remediation team consisted of 8 field officers and a Project Coordinator, receiving support from the PDA Research, Evaluation and Learning Unit and the PDA Communications & Advocacy Unit.

Key activities and impacts on the project include the following:

- 1. School Kit Support:** 3049 children received one-off donations of school kits and supplies to facilitate their enrolment and retention in school. This intervention relieved the burden on cocoa-growing families and renewed interest in education for some out-of-school children.



- 2. Vocation and Apprenticeship Enrolment:** 129 children who opted out of returning to formal educational institutions were enrolled in vocational and apprenticeship tuition and supported to learn a trade of their choice. These children were assigned to master craftspeople and given complementary tools and equipment support. The stellar retention rate of this intervention (97%) was attributed to regular monitoring by PDA sector coordinators and Nyonkopa coaches. Beneficiary children were excited at the sense of purpose they now had in life, and many households reported the financial relief it had given them.



3. Community Sensitization on Child Labour: Several activities were organized to raise awareness, provide information, and mobilize community members and households to avoid and prevent child labour. An estimated 3500 households were reached with these campaigns. In some communities, community members have made it their duty to look out for child labor abuses and report them to their VSLA groups for redress.



4. Farmer Voice Radio Programme: The Farmer Voice Radio project recorded six sessions of conversations among farmers about child labour, its effects, prevention strategies, and the role of regulatory bodies in Ghana. These recordings are being broadcast through community information systems in 80 cocoa-growing communities across 7 sectors to sensitize farmers and their households against child labour.



5. VSLA+ Activities: 43 VSLA+ groups are running under the project; 39 of these groups have received Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) Training to enhance the saving habits, loan accessibility, and child labor awareness of the Nyonkpa farmers. These groups have resulted in improved various aspects of household and individual well-being, such as asset expenditure levels, small scale business performance, education spending, access to health and good nutrition, and housing quality. Member farmers appreciated the VSLA+ groups as a platform for not only saving, but also challenging harmful behaviors such as gender stereotypes and child labor misconceptions.



6. Community Mobile Library: 8 mobile reading clubs have been formed across child labour-endemic communities. This intervention aimed to enhance the self-esteem, literacy, and communication skills of target children through reading activities. The successes of the intervention have kickstarted conversations among community leaders to establish school libraries in three schools, using the books provided by the project as the initial stock. An inter-sector essay competition was held among children throughout the project sectors, and all participants received certificates while the winners received other prizes.



7. Birth Certificates: 1758 birth certificates were procured and distributed to children who did not have any. This document is increasingly critical as it can help protect children from various forms of violence, abuse and exploitation such as child marriage, child labour, trafficking and illegal adoption. It can also help children access essential social services, such as health care, education and justice. Birth certificates can also help prevent family separation and statelessness for migrant and refugee children.



The intervention officially closed-out on 31 August 2023. We are grateful for the collaboration of all key stakeholders including District Social Welfare and Community Development Units, the Circuit Supervisors of the Ghana Education Service Directorates, the Ghana Health Services (Community Health Nurses), and parents and community leaders. Radio Stations.

2023 in Review:

PDA Communications & Advocacy

The Advocacy and Communications Unit (ACU) handles PDA's social development initiatives, advocacy projects, and liaises with other units within the organization on project deliverables that include publications or any other elements of communication. As part of its core responsibilities, the Unit also oversees the organization's media strategy and engagement, including the production and publication of content on the PDA website, social media platforms, and the coordination of media coverage for PDA activities, among others.

Through strategic communications, we ensure that project staff, partners, beneficiaries, the client, and other stakeholders including the general public are well-informed on the status and progress of projects through knowledge

sharing and pathways for feedback. More intentionally, the ACU crafts and delivers communication messages for the purposes of disseminating research findings, advocating among various audiences for specific changes towards social development, and impacting knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Our team has the professional expertise to engage our targets using a diverse range of advocacy tools, including the production and dissemination of written, audio, visual, and audio-visual outputs including documentaries, jingles, radio discussions, radio advertisements, illustrative flashcards, photo-books, infographics, webinars and social media campaigns. We are also well-versed in the planning and execution of stakeholder engagement and learning events.



**Young Female Businesses for Growth
(YOFEB-4G) -- Partner Innovation Fund**

Partner: Artisans Association of Ghana;

World University Service of Canada

Status: Ongoing

The Young Female Businesses for Growth (YoFeB-4G) Project is aimed at providing business formalization and development support to young female artisans in their pursuit to legitimize their participation and decision-making power in the traditionally male-dominated construction industry. Through knowledge sharing, skills enhancement, and coaching and mentorship opportunities, the YoFeB-4G project strengthens the networks of young women within the construction sector to ensure a safe, secure, and healthy work environment for them.

Having kickstarted in 2022, the project reached the third phase of implementation by the end of 2023. The team began the year with the development and publication of a training manual on business formalization in the construction industry in Ghana (available for free download from <http://bit.ly/3WzOXOv>). We also completed two sessions of formalization training for two cohorts of 100 young female artisans (in January and February 2023) at the Ghana TVET Service. Moreover, beneficiaries were taken through a total of four sessions of technical skills enhancement with BOSCH Ghana and KNAUF Ghana. In August, an orientation for mentors and peer mentors on the project was organized in Accra and the team kickstarted virtual mentoring sessions. Project beneficiaries





were grouped into 5 groups based on skill/trade area, and assigned female mentors and peer mentors. In all, 3 virtual and 1 in-person mentoring session were held between August and November 2023. The final mentoring session is scheduled for January 2024, after which the team will focus on advocacy and the formal registration of beneficiaries' businesses with the Office of the Registrar of Companies.

The project has thus far been able to reach 100 young female artisans working in the construction value chain. The project

training and mentoring sessions have been impactful since project participants have reported improved knowledge of the processes of business formalization in Ghana, project bidding, financial literacy and records keeping. It has also allowed project participants to forge long-lasting partnerships among themselves and with relevant stakeholders within the construction industry. The team is excited by the planned development of a mobile app featuring only female artisans which will allow potential customers to browse their expertise and engage them for employment.



7th Knowledge Sharing Workshop

Partner: AfriKids Ghana; Department of Children (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection)

Status: Completed

PDA introduced the Annual Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Child Protection in 2017 in fulfilment of a strategic goal and to strengthen the advocacy drive for the protection of children's rights in Ghana. Different context-relevant topics bordering on child rights and child protection are tabled for discussion every year. Since its inception, the workshop has made remarkable input into national policy on child protection.

In 2023, PDA hosted the 7th Knowledge Sharing Workshop in Walewale (North East Region). Themed "Tackling Child Marriage in Northern Ghana: A Shift from the Rhetoric to Evidence-Based Advocacy", the event featured a presentation of insights from national census data on child marriage in Ghana, as well as a documentary primarily on the prevalence of child marriage in AfriKids' target districts, and a panel discussion. A total of about 72 people were present at the event, including representatives

from the communities, traditional rulers, faith institutions, the private sector, and government institutions.

The documentary [PDA TV](#) generated thought-provoking conversations on some of the least talked-about cultural norms that facilitate the perpetuation of child marriage in the Region. There was a renewed commitment from participants to strengthen the fight against child marriage in the Upper East and Northeast regions where the incidence is rife.



A future Unbound: Confronting Child Marriage in Northern Ghana

We were able to secure a media partnership with A1 Radio, which broadcasted the full event on their station, featured a discussion of child marriage on their morning show, and published fliers and press releases of the event on their website and social media.



Child Abuse Tracker

The PDA Child Abuse Tracker is an online platform that records cases of child abuse reported in both print and online media outlets. Over the last 12 months, more than 80 cases of child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and abduction) were recorded, with more than 70 percent of the victims being females. The data generated by the platform has been useful, particularly in analyses of trends and hotspots of child abuse in Ghana.

Digital Presence & Webinars

Our usual activities have included updating PDA's online platforms (website and social media) with appropriate content. We have supported the work of other units through proofreading, design of multimedia content, reports, etc. The ACU has also been spearheading the smooth running of monthly staff meetings, and has started work on developing unit profiles for various units in PDA.

The ACU hosted one webinar in 2023 for PDA's online audience. The topic was on "Financial Inclusion" and attracted an engaged audience of about 90 people. The recording is available on [PDA TV](#)



Representation of PDA to External Partners

The ACU has participated in a series of trainings and engagements with WUSC, including a GESI (Gender Equity and Social Inclusion) training, ESCA (Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action) training, as well as a photography and videography skills session organized by WUSC for all their organizational partners in January. Additionally, PDA was represented for the PAC (Partner Advisory Committee) meeting, and Partner Forums organized by WUSC.

The National Child Protection Committee, of which PDA is a member, had a number of meetings in 2023. The ACU represented PDA and shared on our activities that were geared towards child protection within that quarter. We also benefitted from presentations by UNICEF, MOGSCP and other child protection-focused organizations.

The ACU also represented PDA at a networking event organized by Y-PARD (Young Professionals for Agricultural Development). PDA was awarded a citation for our support of the group, and we gave a few words of congratulation to the outgoing country president. We also welcomed the incoming country president, Paul Atsu, who happens to have been working with the ACU for the past year.

Support in the Work of Other Units

The Advocacy and Communications Unit has supported the work of other units in diverse ways. Some of these include:

- **Farmer Voice Radio:** The ACU worked in partnership with PDA Africa on the Farmer Voice Radio project for Barry Callebaut. The ACU recorded both audio and video versions of the discussions with farmers on child labour, which was later played periodically in project communities.
- **Cocoa Communities' Library Project:** The ACU has played an instrumental role in implementing the Cocoa Communities' Library Project, funded by the Magic Libraries Foundation. The ACU supported the design of publicity and award materials, as well as the hosting of the launch, cluster-level competitions and the grande finale, the Annual Reading Festival.
- **Young Impact Associates:** The ACU worked in partnership with PDA REL, SDD-UBIDS and the Mastercard Foundation to produce multimedia content, and plan and host a number of events on the YIA program. The outputs include the production of midline and endline impact stories, as well as various calls for application. The Cohort 1 Graduation Ceremony and Partner Impact Convening were also planned and supported by the ACU.
- **Development of Flashcards for VSLA+:** The ACU has supported PDA Africa in the design and production of illustrated flashcards on various VSLA+ modules.



Thank you for reading our newsletter!

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