Summary Learning report Ghana 2008
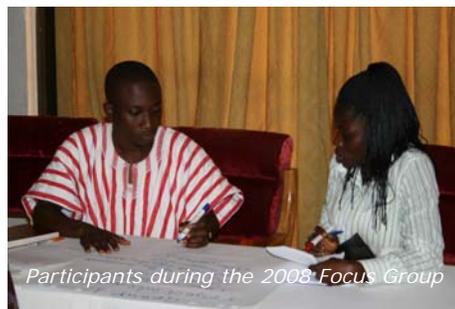## Impact of the Livelihoods programme
"…the first time I had information from Gbindiri, I took my cowpea there and had money"

This report is a summary of the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) report on the Ghana Country Programme in 2008. Summaries are published on the IICD website to show the work of our local project partners and the results that these partners and IICD have achieved. Important to point out is that evaluation reports are meant for learning, hence they focus on the outcomes and impact of the projects as well as their successes and challenges, rather than checking on project progress or money spent, which is done via progress reports.

Evaluations are based on questionnaires for different stakeholders. Depending on the country, the evaluation includes project teams (reflecting on IICD's support), participants of trainings (reflecting on capacity development) and end users (reflecting on the projects they take part in). Data from these questionnaires is analysed by a local M&E partner, who also facilitates a subsequent Focus Group meeting with the partners who implement the different projects. The discussions in this meeting result in more qualitative data from the projects (what is actually happening on the ground) as well as exchange of experiences (successes and challenges), and lessons learned for partners and IICD.

The evaluation report below is the unmodified original work of Hippolyt A. S. Pul and Margaret Kyiu of Development Alternative Services Foundation, the M&E partner in Ghana. It gives an overview of both the data collected and the discussions that followed in the Focus Group, in this case mainly focussing on end users of Livelihoods projects, trainings and support from IICD. Though sensitive information from specific partners has been removed to maintain a trust relationship with and between partners, M&E reports are an honest representation of the processes and lessons concerning the Country Programme. In 2008, the Country Programme in Ghana consisted of 7 projects on the ground and in implementation. 636 questionnaires have been collected in Ghana in 2008.

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) works with a number of institutions in Ghana to deliver development interventions designed to increase access to and promote the use of information, Communication and Technology (ICT) as an instrument of development. Partner institutions range from the Ministry of Communications of the Government of Ghana to local NGOs working in various parts of the country. Target beneficiaries therefore vary from government functionaries through students in selected schools, NGO staff, to community-based groups of farmers, all of whom are assisted to increasingly use ICT for their work, increased access to markets, as well as, other forms of information that enhance their production, productivity and incomes. To ensure effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning from the various interventions, IICD has put in place a monitoring and evaluation system that allows IICD, its partner institutions annually to receive feedback, during focus group discussions, on project achievements and take appropriate actions

Participants during the 2008 Focus Group

where necessary to ensure that the interventions achieve the desired results. This document summarizes the outcomes of the evaluations and focused group discussions for 2008.

Overall, the 2008 evaluations show an increased participation of women in the activities of the various projects, compared to 2007. Also, more than 70% of respondents consistently indicated that they were satisfied with all the categories of project services provided in 2008. Project beneficiaries also witnessed increased

development impacts on their lives as a result of their participation in the various project interventions. They did not witness any negative impacts on their lives or line of business. The gender impact of the various interventions was however mixed as some beneficiaries did not see the gender impacts of the interventions.

At the institutional level, project managers and team members were very satisfied with direct assistance received from IICD on technical, strategic, and operational level of the interventions in 2008. They were also satisfied with the internal organizational support, collaboration, and exchange, as well as the training provided by IICD. However project teams did not see their projects as being very innovative, neither did they see any catalytic effects of their interventions.

On training, younger and better educated people continue to patronize training opportunities offered by IICD and partner institutions. These people were mostly project team members. They also expressed satisfaction with the various aspects of the course(s) they attended. Respondents to the capacity development part II also reported having found the training they attended very useful with the majority reporting daily usage of the knowledge and skills gained from the training(s). They also witnessed some development impact on the lives and/or as a result of their participation in the training.

Overall, both IICD and partners have indicated satisfaction of the achievements in the various projects and have committed themselves to improving service delivery especially in the areas of increasing the participation of women in the projects.

The findings in this report were presented to the national focus group meeting in October 2008 where results were discussed and suggestions were made for improvement. Salient among the suggestions were the following:

Female participation
In respect of the need for increasing gender parity in participation in IICD-supported projects, several partners shared their experiences on how they managed to increase the participation of women in their respective projects. Among them, ECAMIC indicated that they made a conscious effort in defining criteria for increased inclusion of women in the projects, based on lessons learned from the 2007 evaluations. Among their efforts, specific women's crops were targeted for inclusion in the price information collection and dissemination, to increase the interest of women in the project. In addition, all participating groups in IICD-sponsored training events were required to present a man and woman as the trainees. In the case of PEPS-C and MAPRONET, on the other, the fact that they were already working with sizeable women's only groups prior to the project was a major booster to their ability to ncrease the participation of women; as the recruitment of women into project activities came by default. In the case of PEPS-C, however, the inclusion of babysitting assistance alongside training events facilitated the participation of women in training. For MAPRONET, use of convenience sampling was a major factor in the increased participation of women in MAPRONET's respondents to the evaluation survey. This skewed the respondents in favor of women. The M&E partner would be more involved with the selection of respondents for MAPRONET in the future to avert this situation.

Illiteracy in the projects
To overcome the challenges related to the high level of illiteracy, participants at the national focus group suggested the inclusion of literacy programs in their interventions to help their project clients to read and write. ECAMIC had some experiences with using SMS text messaging as the basis for the literacy training. Other suggestions included the active recruitment of family members who can read into programs to help with translations.

Innovation
With respect to the degree of innovativeness of the project activities, participants in the national focus group discussions observed that the reported low perception of the innovative nature of the projects may stem from several factors that include the inappropriate location of projects; limited access to internet facilities and/or other services associated with the project; or the

limited adaptation of the technologies to local cultures. To redress this situation, they suggested that efforts should be made to locate project s at places where impact can be much felt; modify systems designs for internet access to include the use of GPRS modems; provide ancillary services such as provision of child caretakers to encourage patronage by women, and the need to diversify the use of systems such as the use of mobile phones o access market information.