iPODS AND OUTCOMES: Process Evaluation of The Hunger Project’s Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project in Ghana

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<td>Assistant Project Officer</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
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<td>GPS</td>
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<td>International Development Studies</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<td>PM&amp;E</td>
<td>Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>Vision, Commitment, Action</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a process evaluation conducted by a team of George Washington University graduate students. The evaluation examined the implementation of initial stages of The Hunger Project’s (THP) Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project and provided technical assistance for field-testing data collection tools to be used in later phases of the Pilot. THP aims to use electronic data collection tools, iPods, the iFormBuilder and iTalk applications, and Garmin GPS units, to record data from household surveys, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The George Washington University Capstone Team conducted the process evaluation from January-April 2012, including one week of fieldwork in Ghana. In this report, the Capstone team presents the activities, results, and recommendations from the evaluation.

The Hunger Project

The Hunger Project (THP) is a global, non-profit, strategic organization committed to the sustainable end of world hunger. In Ghana, THP is implementing its Epicenter Strategy with the goal of ending hunger and poverty by empowering people to lead lives of self-reliance, meet basic needs, and build better futures for their children. The Epicenter Strategy targets four underlying determinants of hunger and poverty: marginalized women food farmers, lack of leadership capacity, underinvestment in building people’s capacity in rural areas, and gender inequality fuelling the AIDS epidemic.

Key Findings

Capacity and Partnership

The capacity and partnership of THP are its major strengths. All staff encountered by the Capstone team was enthusiastic about THP and invested in the philosophy and goals of the organization. During the technology training, staff reported that the technology of iPods and iFormBuilder gave the impression that the global office was investing in their professional careers, legitimizing their work. Continuing to invest in the staff can enhance and supplement other areas that need improvement within the organization. Creating and promoting opportunities for staff between different countries to communicate and share ideas will also further benefit THP.
Technology for Data Collection

Adopting iFormBuilder carries risks; the technology has technological flaws and the household survey needs significant revision before it can be implemented with reliability and validity. The technology also carries security risks, as the enumerators will have expensive equipment and may be targets of pickpockets/muggers. The technology makes THP leaders in the field of development and can reflect well on the organization. Staff is motivated and excited to use technology, but THP will have to be wary of waning enthusiasm.

Data Collection and Analysis

THP’s commitment to participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) has been instrumental in building capacity for output data collection and analysis; most country staff in Ghana understand the value and importance of data collection and analysis. Staff capacity is high, but staff will require additional training to realize their full potential, particularly in qualitative data collection and analysis. Standardization may prove to be an issue in collecting household survey data. Because of Ghana’s multiple languages, in some instances household survey enumerators will need to rely on M&E animators to translate the survey in the field. This may compromise the validity of the household survey; M&E animators will need special training to understand the importance of collecting reliable data. THP’s global office will best prepare the country staff for the implementation of the pilot by creating and sharing a planning timeline, working backwards from goals and building in “buffer” time to account for unanticipated occurrences.

Communication

Vision, Commitment, and Action (VCA) works as an effective strategy to mobilize the community. THP’s global office offers excellent explanations of processes and strategies and should capitalize on this strength to communicate expectations for implementing the Pilot. Country staff are not empowered to bridge divides caused by cross-cultural communication challenges. THP should adopt specific processes to better communicate and ensure staff understands their roles and expectations.
INTRODUCTION

George Washington University Capstone Team

The Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University is one of the nation’s leading professional schools in international affairs. Its International Development Studies (IDS) program is a multidisciplinary program designed to provide students with a broad understanding and application of development issues and theories as well as the process involved in formulating policy and implementing development projects. The IDS program culminates in a Capstone project under the guidance of a professor. Student groups capitalize on their strengths and capabilities to seek out real-world consulting experience with a development organization. Students are responsible for finding their own client organizations and fulfilling field-based assignments based on the needs of the clients. The IDS program has implemented capstone projects for close to a decade, during which time students have successfully helped to implement development projects for dozens of leading development organizations, including government agencies, international organizations, NGOs, and consulting firms.

The Epicenter Strategy

The International Development Studies (IDS) Ghana Capstone Team sought to work with The Hunger Project based on the organization’s commitment to integrated development and participatory programming. Through its Epicenter Strategy, THP tackles four underlying determinants of hunger and poverty: marginalized women food farmers, lack of leadership capacity, underinvestment in building people’s capacity in rural areas, and gender inequality fuelling the AIDS epidemic. The Epicenter Strategy works in clusters of rural villages to integrate programs in health; education; adult literacy; nutrition; improved farming and food security; microfinance; water and sanitation; building community capacity, and self-efficacy. Addressing these issues through a holistic program, the Epicenter Strategy moves beyond traditional, service delivery-oriented development work. Instead, it integrates efforts across sectors, emphasizing community participation to improve quality of life, economic viability, and environmental sustainability. Currently, THP has mobilized more than 100 epicenter communities in eight countries throughout Africa. Twenty-one of those epicenters now function independently of THP both financially and logistically, underscoring THP’s emphasis on locally-empowered, sustainable development.
The Hunger Project in Ghana

Ghana has one of the strongest emerging economies in Africa. Rich in natural resources with a stable democratic government, Ghana is experiencing a period of rapid economic growth. Despite this, most of Ghana’s poor live in rural areas without basic services such as health care and clean water. Small-scale farmers, who are affected most by rural poverty in Ghana, often depend on outdated farming tools and lack access to improved seeds and fertilizers to increase crop yields. This geographically and culturally diverse region is also characterized by multiple languages, which pose communication challenges for organizations working in the area.

The Hunger Project has worked in Ghana since 1995 to empower partners to end their own hunger and poverty and lead lives of self-reliance. THP has mobilized communities around 52 epicenters, predominantly located in the Eastern Region. Through its integrated approach to rural development, The Hunger Project works with Ghana partners to successfully access the basic services they need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ghana is the first country in which The Hunger Project is scaling up its Epicenter Strategy to provide coverage to a set geographical area and to reach significantly more people. In July 2006, The Hunger Project received a US$5 million investment from The Robertson Foundation to scale up the Epicenter Strategy in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Scaling-up has presented a number of challenges to THP-Ghana, such as acquisition of land and the mobilization of construction materials. Through THP’s participatory strategy to build capacity, staff is equipped with the training and skills to continue to mobilize partners to end their own hunger.

Overall management of THP-Ghana falls to Country Director, Dr. Naana Agyemang-Mensah. In March 2012, THP hired Mr. Emmanuel Avevor to direct the M&E unit, joining Mr. Francis Osei-Mensah, the M&E Officer. Project Officers (PO) and Assistant Project Officers (APO) manage programming in the epicenters, and monitor and report on progress. Capstone team with THP-Ghana staff and community partners at a THP Epicenter
output data to the two M&E officers located in the head office located in Accra. THP-Ghana has trained community partners as M&E Animators in the communities as well. These M&E Animators assist the POs and APOs to collect data on outputs from the numerous trainings and programs in each Epicenter.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Prior to conducting fieldwork in Ghana, the Capstone Team conducted preliminary research on THP and its Outcome Evaluation Pilot. The team then compiled a Preliminary Research Report, which included an overview of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) and examined THP’s Outcome Evaluation Pilot approach. The report also included an overview of sampling and data collection for qualitative and quantitative evaluation, and concluded by offering key lessons from case studies on data collection in practice. For further reference, the report is attached as Appendix A.

Overview of Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation

Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E) works with community actors to manage projects, perform self-assessment, strategize and assess organizational goals, and build capacity. In traditional, top-down M&E, external organizations act as experts to predetermine indicators of success based on ostensibly objective metrics that measure results for finders. The impetus for monitoring and evaluation is largely for accountability and to garner further funding.

In contrast, PM&E engages community stakeholders as experts who are invested in their own development. They generate and conduct M&E, while the program director merely guides the process. (Issel 2009) M&E aims not only to improve program understanding, but also to transform the working relationships between the donor, project management, and target community by including each group into a wider scope of evaluation. (Bamberger et al. 2006)
This focus on community participation and empowerment forms the foundation of THP’s approach to PM&E. From the outset, THP incorporated PM&E into the Epicenter Strategy by involving community members as stakeholders and experts integral to the success of all stages of the project. Community participation includes determining and prioritizing the community’s needs, planning activities to address those needs, managing the project, and setting the monitoring and evaluation criteria. Through their active participation, community stakeholders drive a unique and relevant vision of success.

Emphasis on community participation moves beyond solely quantitative, performance-driven measures by incorporating qualitative methods, including focus groups and in-depth interviews. Direct feedback elicits the how and why, not solely what and how much, indicators did or did not lead to outcomes and impact. This methodology aligns with the THP mission by empowering Ghanaians living in conditions of hunger and poverty to be the primary agents of their own development. Strengthening the skills needed to participate and actively monitor their own progress forms an integral component of program success and sustainability.

**Design of the Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project**

**Overview and Objective of Pilot Outcome Evaluation Project**

To determine how program outputs have been translated into outcomes, THP launched the Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project. The objective of the pilot project is to field test, review, and revise data collection tools and the new outcome indicators in two African countries – Ghana and Malawi. The overall Outcome Evaluation Pilot aims to create a participatory outcome monitoring and evaluation system which will then become integrated into regular THP programming; THP M&E country officers, field staff, and key community members will guide the process and gather and analyze data to report outcomes.

Once the Pilot evaluation is completed, the revised data collection tools and indicators will be scaled up and implemented on a larger level within Ghana and in all of THP’s country programs across Sub-Saharan Africa. Data will be analyzed at both the country level and the global level, with cross-country comparison being the ultimate goal.

THP is currently in an iterative process of determining a set of core global outcome indicators and data collection instruments and tools. Each country program has created an M&E Task Force, consisting of country staff to provide feedback on the global indicators to the global office, which then refines the
global indicators based on this information. When collecting data on these indicators, THP’s Outcome Evaluation Pilot will rely on both qualitative and quantitative data to document not only what is happening, but also why and how this change has occurred. Data will be collected using three tools: *household surveys, focus groups, and in-depth key informant interviews*. The global office is creating a draft household survey based off of the global indicators, but each country office will create semi-structured interview guides for key informant interviews and focus group discussion.

**Guiding Tools: Theories of Change Model and Logical Framework**

To successfully transition from outputs to outcomes, THP relies on the Theories of Change and Logical Framework methodologies as guiding tools. The Theories of Change (ToC) model graphically demonstrates linkages between inputs, activities, outputs, and the resulting outcomes, while also mapping out the preconditions required to achieve program goals. Theories of Change help to map change, parsing out the causal pathways leading to household and community level changes that have occurred as a result of participation in the Epicenter Strategy (i.e. outcomes). Employing ToC methods facilitated THPs successful development of core outcome indicators at a global level by outlining how program accomplishments and interventions can produce long-term outcomes for individuals and communities. With ToC as the primary evaluation tool, THP uses the Logical Framework Model to clearly illustrate the logic flow between outcomes, inputs and activities. For further reference, the Theories of Change map for Ghana is attached in Appendix B.

Ghana’s large size, high level of program participation in the Epicenter Strategy, and field staff already acquainted with data collection tools make the country an excellent location to pilot field testing for outcome indicators and data collection tools. The Ghana M&E staff has assisted the global office in determining country-specific progress indicators and will be primarily responsible for carrying out field-testing and data collection.

**Figure 2**

![Diagram](image-url)
Outcome Indicator Matrix

THP’s Outcome Indicator Matrix outlines program areas, their goals, expected outcomes, key monitoring questions, outcome and impact indicators, means of verifying those indicators, respective data collection tools, sources and timeframe for each program area, baseline data, and targets. The global office and local field staff are finalizing a set of core global outcome indicators, which they will then use to measure program results in Ghana and Malawi. Each country then adds country-specific outcome indicators relevant to programs carried out in that particular setting. They then develop and field test a set of standardized data collection tools in five randomly chosen epicenters in each country. Once these data are tested and collected, the results will be compared between Ghana and Malawi, the pilot countries.

GW CAPSTONE TEAM PROCESS EVALUATION

Purpose

In January 2012, the Hunger Project contracted the George Washington University Capstone Team to conduct an external process evaluation of its Outcomes Evaluation Pilot. Keeping with the participatory philosophy of THP, the process evaluation occurred through full immersion in THP-Ghana activities with an intent to understand and support THP during Pilot field testing. The first activity in the process evaluation included reviewing and assessing survey instruments and data collection tools used in the pilot project and making recommendations before the launch of the tools on a larger scale. In addition, THP asked the Capstone team to provide support for THP-Ghana’s Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officers with the following tasks: testing electronic data collection tools and software; conducting training for THP-Ghana staff on how to use the tools; working with staff to field test the survey instruments and data collection tools and revising the process prior to full implementation; planning an enumerator training manual; and analyzing the existing data analysis systems. Based on these activities and preliminary research conducted by the Capstone team, THP asked the Capstone team to provide recommendations for THP to improve their Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project.

The Capstone team conducted the process evaluation through routine conference calls and communication with THP, including a visit to their global headquarters in New York City. The Capstone team also traveled to THP-Ghana headquarters in March 2012 to conduct training and test survey instruments.
Note on Terminology

In this report, the Capstone team distinguishes the survey instruments as the household survey (HHS), key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD). Data collection tools refers to the specific technologies used to collect data, including iPod touches, a Garmin GPS unit, iFormBuilder, and iTalk.

Process Evaluation Framework and Methods

The external evaluation of the Outcome Pilot Project included two Capstone teams, one in Ghana and one in Malawi. Both Capstone teams generally employed the same rigorous method design to triangulate results and compare across countries. The process evaluation used a qualitative design to gauge THP-Ghana partners’ attitudes, knowledge, assumptions, and perceptions about launching the Outcome Evaluation Pilot to provide THP with an assessment of the potential risks, challenges, and opportunities as they implement the pilot. The qualitative design of the assessment allowed the Capstone team to discern patterns, topics, and themes that arose during the field visit. As external evaluators, the Capstone teams took a phenomenological approach to the site visit in an attempt to bring a fresh perspective on THP’s understanding of the process.

The Capstone team conducted participant observation over the course of one week at the THP headquarters in Accra and at the Ankoma Epicenter in Ankoma, Ghana. The Capstone team actively participated in the activities of the process evaluation to assess the program through the eyes of a partner. Capstone members had full access to THP resources, including staff, documents, and the THP intranet. Capstone members collected data through extensive field notes and informal interviews with key partners using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix C). Because of the short amount of time at the site, participants were chosen using purposive, convenience sampling. Sample units included the THP-Ghana country staff, Program Officers and Assistant Program Officers, M&E Animators, Ankoma Community Leaders, and Ankoma Community Members. Focus group discussion took place during the technology training as well as during the Ankoma epicenter visit. To understand the scope of the Pilot and THP’s place in the field, the Capstone team analyzed existing data and expert opinions prior to traveling to the site.

The analytic process involved immersing the Capstone team in the data to discern patterns and topics that arose; transcribing, coding, and comparing data. Data sources used for analysis included field notes, informal interviews and focus group discussions with THP partners, email exchanges with THP-Ghana
and THP-Global staff, Skype conversations, and recommendations made to the Malawi Capstone team. Upon returning from the field, the Capstone team transcribed field notes and interviews and performed an initial open analysis of the data. Based on this initial analysis, the Capstone team created a codebook of short descriptors of major themes. Team members then systematically compared and contrasted data transcriptions until data were saturated, so that analysis provided no new codes or topics.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

To achieve the objectives developed in the Process Evaluation, the GW Capstone team implemented a number of activities using the qualitative research methods described above. The following section outlines the specific activities performed by the GW Capstone team during their visit to Accra, Ghana. For reference, the full agenda is attached in Appendix E.

Reviewing Survey Instruments

To field test the data collection tools, the GW Capstone team worked with THP-Global and THP-Ghana to develop preliminary, or “beta” versions of the survey instruments to use during the field test: the household survey and semi-structured interview guide for use during focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII).

Household Surveys

THP-Global created a beta household survey as a means of verifying quantitative indicators. Prior to the Capstone field visit in Accra, the household survey was incomplete, but had several modules finalized. The GW-Ghana and Malawi Capstone teams worked with THP-Global to adapt the household survey into the iFormBuilder software. This allowed the teams to have an electronic beta household survey to test against an identical paper version of the survey. The beta survey consisted of approximately sixty questions programmed into iFormBuilder on two iPod touches. The Capstone group then compared and analyzed the paper format of the survey against the electronic format by observing THP enumerators from the Ghana M&E unit administer both versions at the Ankoma epicenter. In observing this process, the Capstone team was able to detect differences between the two versions and make informed recommendations on the benefits and risks of both formats.

Preparing the beta household survey presented many challenges, which are described in the Results section of this paper. Survey questions were not field tested independently prior to the field test of the
data collection tools, so the Ankoma Epicenter visit also served to test the household survey questions themselves.

The THP-Global office finalized the beta household survey in iFormBuilder the morning of the field test, which did not allow THP-Ghana staff or the Capstone team sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the iPod touch technology or the survey questions. The field test did afford the Ghana partners the opportunity to observe and make revisions to the survey instruments. Collectively reviewing the household survey directly after the field visit helped foster the communication of ideas. The review also provided an ideal environment for the systematic improvement of survey instruments and helped increase their reliability and validity.

**Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews**

THP plans to enhance its outcomes evaluation with qualitative data collection and analysis. Prior to the GW Capstone field visit to Ghana, key informant interview and focus group discussion guides had not been developed. The Capstone team collaborated with the M&E unit to prepare a semi-structured interview guide. THP-Ghana staff expressed interest in exploring issues of gender equity and the impact that THP was having on gender norms and roles within the communities, as this was a particular focus of programming in Ghana. The partners consulted the THP Global Indicator Matrix and chose an indicator on gender equity to use as the focus of the FGD and KII questions.

A constraint in developing the questions was that the global indicators used qualitative data collection to verify quantitative indicators. M&E staff had prepared a questionnaire similar to a household survey, fulfilling the needs of the indicators, but undermining the purpose of using qualitative methods. The new M&E Director was particularly effective at helping THP-Ghana staff reframe questions using a quantitative approach. The questions were grounded within the THP-Ghana context and were formulated directly from the experiences and prior expertise of the Ghana staff. After working with the Capstone team to develop a semi-structured interview guide based off of the global indicators, the staff expressed interest in receiving more training in qualitative data collection and analysis. For reference, please see Appendix C for the semi-structured interview guide.
Technology Training

Mobile Data Collection Technology

As part of the preparation for the Pilot, THP sought to determine the feasibility of using mobile data devices as data collection tools. THP asked the Capstone team to train THP-Ghana staff on how to use iPod Touches loaded with iFormBuilder (an electronic survey application) and iTalk (a voice recording application), as well as handheld Garmin Global Positioning System (GPS) units to collect epicenter location waypoints.

iFormBuilder enhances household survey data collection by streamlining data collection in the field. To use iFormBuilder, staff at THP-Global first create a household survey on the iFormBuilder website. iPod touches, which are loaded with the iFormBuilder application, then synchronize with the website and download the survey. Survey enumerators then can use the application on the iPods to access the information created on the iFormBuilder website, and conduct the household survey in the field. The iPods do not need to be connected to the internet to conduct a survey. Once enumerators return from the field and connect to a wireless internet connection, they can again synchronize the iPods with the iFormBuilder website, which uploads the collected survey data into an online database. The THP-Ghana M&E unit can then access the data for analysis. Using iFormBuilder requires a significant time investment to design and code the surveys, but eliminates the need for survey enumerators to enter the collected survey data into a database manually, greatly reducing human error and saving significant time.

iPod touches also allow THP field staff to use iTalk, an application that turns the iPod into an audio recording device to record focus group discussions and key informant interviews. After recording an interview or focus group discussion, someone will likely have to transcribe the recordings manually, as few software programs currently exist to accurately transcribe audio-recorded interviews in multiple languages.

THP also plans to use Garmin GPS tools to capture a complete picture of the scale of the Epicenter pilot by collecting waypoints of epicenters to create maps.
Administering Training

In the months prior to traveling to Ghana, the Capstone team worked with THP-Global to become familiar with the iFormBuilder software, and create a “beta” household survey. The initial step in the Capstone group’s field activities in Accra was to prepare and conduct training of the data collection technology. The Capstone team administered a half-day training session on the iPod Touches, using the iFormBuilder software to demonstrate how to conduct a household survey, iTalk software to show how to record interviews for qualitative data collection, and a Garmin GPS unit to demonstrate how to take geographic waypoints. Ten Ghana staff members took part in the training, including the Ghana Country Deputy Director, the M&E unit, Program Officers, Assistant Program Officers, Regional Officers, and Assistant Regional Officers. The training combined a PowerPoint presentation, live demonstration and hands-on activities to familiarize the staff with collecting qualitative and quantitative data and using the data collection tools and software. The training also served as a focus group for the Capstone team to gauge interest and gather feedback on the data collection tools.

THP-Ghana partners were engaged in the training, and expressed interest in the potential benefits of using the new technology for data collection. While the participants were eager to learn to how to use the data collection tools, they raised concerns about their ease of use and practicality in the field. Participants had varying degrees of familiarity with the iPod touches and had no experience with iFormBuilder. Those who had prior experience with touch screen technology learned the iPod Touch features quickly, while those who lacked prior experience required more in-depth demonstration.

Training included hands-on activities, allowing staff to pass around two iPod touches loaded with a short demonstration survey created by the Capstone team, and a third iPod touch loaded with iFormBuilder (but not the demonstration survey). As staff became comfortable with the technology, they raised important and valuable questions about its application for THP-Ghana in the field. Participants broke into small groups and used the iPods to administer the short

Community partners gathered in Ankoma, Ghana
demonstration survey on each other. The groups then synchronized their demonstration surveys to the iFormBuilder website to learn how the data would be managed in the online database.

Staff responded positively to using the electronic data collection technology, arriving at a consensus that the benefits of the new technology would outweigh the challenges. Staff acknowledged that adopting the new electronic data collection tools would shift the time burden by requiring more time up front for the THP-Global staff and M&E unit to create the surveys and train staff. iFormBuilder eliminated the step of enumerators manually entering data, reducing time and (potentially) error.

The Capstone team conducted a separate training for the THP-Ghana M&E unit on how to design and build surveys using the iFormBuilder website. The training featured step-by-step instructions on how to build forms, followed by an opportunity for each staff member to build their own test form using the software. Both staff members were able to learn how to use the website and create basic forms.

Field Testing Tools

After completing the data collection technology training, the Capstone team and THP-Ghana M&E unit traveled to the Ankoma epicenter to field test the data collection technology, comparing it against traditional, paper-based data collection tools. Since the household survey questions and semi-structured interview guide had not been independently tested, the epicenter visit also served to field test not only the data collection tools, but also the instruments. During the visit, THP staff conducted a total of four household interviews, including two interviews performed using the paper HHS and two using the iPod-administered electronic HHS. Partners conducted three focus group discussions – one involving the entire group of 28 participants, and two follow-up discussions where participants were disaggregated by gender. Finally, the M&E staff conducted two key informant interviews using the iTalk application.

Focus Group Discussions

The Ankoma community gathered 28 leaders, including 21 men and 7 women representing the Ankoma epicenter, including its Executive Leadership. Focus group discussion took place in the conference hall of the epicenter building, a large, well-lit and ventilated room, equipped with a raised staging area.

A community partner speaks during a Focus Group Discussion in Ankoma, Ghana
at the front of the hall.

The two THP-Ghana M&E Officers led the discussion with the full group of community leaders in Twi. Although the THP-Global staff and Capstone team had suggested limiting focus group discussion to 6-8 partners, it became clear that limiting the number of participants would alienate community partners. To initiate the discussion, the M&E Officer introduced the M&E pilot project and the iPod touches to the community partners, and then read a statement of informed consent, to which the community partners agreed verbally.

An assistant program officer and a female community member facilitated the discussion. Although the men outnumbered the women almost three to one, women were active participants. Community partners raised hands to respond with often brief, two-to-three word answers, and almost all community partners provided a short response to each question. Periodically, the M&E Officers paused the discussion to translate responses into English for the Capstone team. During the FGD, each M&E officer recorded the discussion using the iTalk application on the iPods. One officer left his device in the middle of the room, while the other officer walked around the room, using the iPod as a de facto microphone. Capstone members noted that having the M&E Officer circulating around the room with the iPod Touch used as a microphone may have been intrusive and could have potentially contributed to the brevity of answers, with partners feeling awkward about responding naturally with the technology.

Household Survey

After the conclusion of the Focus Group Discussions, the GW Capstone team, THP-Ghana staff and partners ventured to households to field test the household survey. The Capstone group and THP M&E unit divided into two teams consisting of one THP-Ghana staff member accompanied by one male and one female team member.

Each team conducted one paper survey and one survey using the iPod touch. Surveys were timed at 30 minutes each. An assistant program officer accompanied one team to translate the survey simultaneously into Twi. All surveys were performed outside, either under the shade of a tree or
directly in front of the homes or businesses of the individuals being interviewed. In all interview occasions multiple observers were present beyond the survey interview teams, including community leaders who at times contributed to answering survey questions.

Once the four tests of the HHS were completed, each M&E Officer conducted a short key informant interview with a community leader. During the interview both M&E officers used the iTalk application to record the conversations. One M&E officer simultaneously took field notes and worked with an assistant program officer, who translated the interview from Twi.

**Database Analysis**

One of the final activities of the Capstone team was to review the Ghana M&E unit’s existing database and discuss the data analysis activities. Currently, data collected by THP-Ghana is stored in multiple, intricately designed Excel spreadsheets, which are in turn organized into folders based on their status and program. The Ghana staff expressed the need to have a more centralized data management system that would enable more efficient querying and reporting on data, and eliminate redundancies in data entry.

**Developing an Enumerator Training Manual**

The Capstone team worked with the THP-Ghana M&E staff to outline an enumerator training manual, taking into account the activities performed throughout the week. The outline was created largely from findings and results gathered from the training and field-testing of tools and instruments. For further reference, the outline of the enumerator manual is attached in Appendix D.

**RESULTS**

**Training**

The Capstone team conducted the training over the course of five hours with four training facilitators. Time was insufficient to comprehensively include all components of the training. Training components such as lecture, hands-on activity, practice exercises, and feedback sessions with staff partners consumed more time than originally anticipated. The Capstone team found that time was especially limited during the feedback session, which occurred at the end of training to gauge participant perceptions of the technology and its application. The Capstone team tailored the training to meet the varying needs of the participants whose range of proficiency with touch screen technology varied
widely. A high trainer-to-participant ratio greatly facilitated the training. Training left insufficient time to adequately discuss iTalk for FGD and KII and the Garmin GPS tool.

**Technology**

**iFormBuilder**

The THP Ghana staff was able to complete forms and use the iFormBuilder application by the end of the training. During the training, the staff was excited that it could eliminate a lengthy manual data entry process and save significant staff resources. The field-test of the tool at the Ankoma Epicenter confirmed this finding; the day after in the THP Ghana office, the M&E staff synced the iFormBuilder applications on the iPods and the data appeared quickly and accurately on the iFormBuilder website within minutes. The staff also said that the required fields would eliminate non-answers or partial answers that occur with paper surveys. The staff also felt that communities might respond better to a survey on a phone, because they would not see the enumerator walk toward them with a large stack of papers.

While field-testing the beta household survey using iFormBuilder, the enumerators used the application successfully with some hesitation. One technological error occurred. The household member module prevented staff members from entering information for more than one household member underscoring that the iFormBuilder software still has many flaws and limitations. THP does face technological risks like this one by using iFormBuilder. THP can mitigate this risk through careful testing of the surveys to ensure proper functioning. Ideally, changes to the surveys should be followed with multiple tests of the surveys—from data collection to data upload—prior to full implementation. This should not be a major burden for THP, as staff could test the surveys with colleagues or family members to check for errors.

Results from comparing the paper survey and the electronic survey were mixed. One enumerator completed the electronic survey faster than the paper survey, and the other completed the paper survey more quickly. In both cases, the survey type completed more
quickly was the second one tested. The enumerator who was slower with iFormBuilder had no practice administering the survey. Even if iFormBuilder takes a similar amount of time as the paper, the time saved on data entry will still make iFormBuilder worthwhile. With sufficient training and practice, enumerators will conduct electronic surveys as fast or faster than iFormBuilder.

Despite the relative success of the beta household survey test in Ankoma, the ability of iFormbuilder and the iPods to handle a large household survey remains an untested issue. While learning iFormBuilder, the GW Capstone teams – both Malawi and Ghana – discovered that large surveys put significant demand on the random access memory (RAM) of the iPods. iFormBuilder will only function properly with approximately 40 active questions or the application might crash. The Capstone group found a solution to this limitation by structuring the household survey with multiple levels of subforms. This limited the number of active questions creating two important benefits. First, it lowered RAM usage and allowed for larger surveys to function properly. Second, this organizes the appearance of the survey on the iPod, making it easier to use. THP should testing iFormBuilder with a complete household survey before moving forward.

Using the iFormBuilder website is more complex than the iPod application. While the GW Capstone team trained the M&E unit on creating a basic form, the process of creating advanced forms like the household survey requires more time for a user to become proficient. The household survey requires advanced form design; the Global office should administer the form design of the household survey, at least until country staff feel they have mastered the website.

iPod Touch

The iPod Touches were effective tools for electronic data collection. The small size makes them compact and easy to transport, which is idea for use in the field. The size also makes them susceptible to loss or theft. During field-testing, the hardware performed without any issues. Battery life was sufficient to administer one household survey and record the FGD and KIIs using the iTalk application.

The community members and respondents mostly appeared indifferent to the use of the technology. A few looked at the device skeptically during household surveys. One enumerator introduced the entire survey as a “cell phone survey,” and the community member did not have a reaction. During the electronic data collection training session, the Capstone group facilitated a discussion among the participants of potential issues with the iPods. The staff discussion centered on these major themes:
• **Battery Life**
  o The staff questioned whether the iPod battery would last long enough to administer surveys for an entire day without recharging. The field test was not sufficient to answer this question. The M&E staff should take a day to test how long the battery life will last. The testing should reflect the activities that would occur during the course of a day in the field, including collecting data for 7 to 8 hours and using the iPods to record audio and take pictures. If the iPod batteries are not sufficient for a full day of use, THP should explore methods to charge the iPods in the field. Options include: purchasing external battery packs for mobile charging, solar powered charging equipment, or a car cigarette lighter charger.

• **Durability**
  o The Capstone team asked the staff if the environmental conditions of fieldwork (heat, dust, rain) were an impediment. The participants equated their cell phones with the iPods, as several had smart phones. Most said that their cell phones work fine in the field and do not get destroyed by the elements. The iPods do not have keys to get jammed, fall off, or easily let in dust or water. Their large glass screens may make them more vulnerable to screen breakage than non-touch screen devices. Proper care can limit these risks. Protective cases will mitigate much of these risks.

• **Touch Screen Size**
  o Some participants, particularly those unaccustomed to touch screen phones, found it difficult to use a touch screen keyboard, especially on such a small device. This should not be a major issue for THP. Typing proficiency on touch screen devices typically improves over time and the household survey is unlikely to require large amounts of typed text, but this issue does underscore the need for ample practice time during training.

• **Appropriate Use**
  o Staff asked what the limitations of use should be for the iPods. The staff raised issues such as “Should enumerators be allowed to use them for personal uses?” and “What impact would personal use have on device memory, performance and battery usage?” Some of the staff felt that personal uses such as listening to music should be allowed,
while others felt the iPod is a work tool, and should not be used for personal uses. The staff felt that the main issue with personal use would be if it interfered with performance, such as draining battery life. THP should establish a policy on the appropriate use of the iPods by enumerators based on the effectiveness of the iPods as electronic data collection tools. Another issue not raised during the discussion could arise if an enumerator tried to sync the iPod with an iTunes account other than the THP account. This could result in the deletion of data and/or settings on the device, including iForm and any collected data that has yet uploaded.

- **Potential for Theft**
  
  - While the staff did not raise this issue directly, the iPods are an expensive tool that could be a target for pickpockets. Some theft may be unavoidable; however, guidelines for security while in possession of the iPod could help limit theft. THP should establish a sign-out system to track who is in possession of each iPod, to increase accountability and to enable THP to keep track of the devices. THP may also need to establish a plan for dealing with lost or stolen devices, which may contain sensitive survey data. THP could use the free **“Find My iPod touch” application**, which can remotely erase information in such events.

**Garmin GPS Units**

The THP Global office originally intended to collect coordinates (or waypoints) of each household survey administered to follow households through time. GPS capabilities could permit mapping of all the Epicenters. Originally THP-Global intended to use Magellan Tough Cases with GPS capability, which would have offered several functions, including adding the ability to collect GPS coordinates, protecting the iPods from elements, and also providing additional battery life. The Magellan Tough Cases were not yet available for the iPod Touch. However, it seems this will not be possible for the pilot. During the technical training there was general excitement about the utility of GPS devices. Participants believed they would be useful in mapping epicenter communities, mapping changes in farmland and the location of schools and other important places, and potentially in providing directions to epicenter.

The Capstone Team and the Ghana staff found that the process of collecting GPS waypoints using the Garmin was simple and easy to understand. However, the device requires the use of proprietary software and maps to be displayed, which may be limited without additional software, maps and
training. Importing collected waypoints into a useful map would require additional, fairly technical, training. If the Garmin is a temporary solution, it may not be worth investing the resources in learning how to use the accompanying BaseCamp software. Additionally, the staff felt that recording locations of households would be cumbersome without having the GPS system integrated into the iPods. They felt taking GPS coordinates with a single device which recorded into iFormBuilder would simplify the process. Staff members were excited to use the Garmins to map epicenters and also to map directions to the epicenters using waypoints. Overall, increasing staff capacity on GPS will serve THPs needs over the life of the pilot.

**iTalk**

The iTalk application for the iPod is a sufficient method for recording interviews and focus group discussions. It is easy to use, but possibly easy for new users to mess up as the interface is not always intuitive. Audio recordings from iTalk can be downloaded to a computer wirelessly with a free computer program called iTalk Sync. During the field test, the Capstone team found audio recordings better when the iPod was centered and the participants sitting in a circle around it.

**Survey Instruments**

**Household Survey**

To assess program outcomes, THP’s Outcome Evaluation Pilot will use household surveys as quantitative data collection tools. A survey enumerator will sit with a member of a household and ask a series of prewritten questions. To compare results across communities and across countries and verify the indicators of outcomes, THP must implement reliable and valid household survey questions.

Reliability refers to consistent questions and answers. When two different respondents are in the same situation, they should respond to the question in the same way. This consistency allows program evaluators to know that any deviation in answers is derived from what the respondents have to say about the situation, not from a flaw in the way the question was asked. Validity ensures that the survey question measures what it is intended to measure. Compromises to validity often stem from lack
of knowledge and social stigma, or not wishing to answer the question. It is therefore important for the questions to be as reliable as possible and to allow the enumerator an opportunity to establish rapport and a sense of ease with the interviewee.

The THP-Ghana staff partners, including the M&E unit and program staff were well-versed in quantitative data collection and understood the importance of reliability and validity. During technology training, the program and M&E staff raised important and astute questions about designing surveys in iFormBuilder to maximize reliability and validity. Using iFormBuilder will likely help to improve the reliability of survey questions, as it does not allow for survey enumerators to choose the order of the questions.

Due to the multiple languages of Ghana, survey enumerators may need to rely on M&E animators to assist with administering the household survey, which may affect reliability and validity. In the experience of one survey administration team, a Program Officer mirrored the role that an M&E Animator would serve during the actual Pilot, translating questions asked by the M&E Officer (survey enumerator). The M&E animator therefore acts as the primary interviewer, posing the questions directly to the community partner. Simultaneous translation caused hesitation and confusion during the survey. In some cases, the enumerator and/or program officer needed to discuss how to translate a particular phrase or topic, asked bystanders for assistance, and re-framed questions multiple times before the respondent understood and answered. Translation in the field allows for variability in how questions are asked and understood, ultimately undermining the validity of the survey.

Thus, to ensure reliability and validity of the survey, THP must account for the simultaneous translation in the field. THP-Ghana staff should prioritize hiring enumerators with multiple language abilities. It will be important for THP to conduct specific training with enumerators, program officers, and selected M&E Animators to field test questions in the languages prevalent at the epicenter to ensure that as much as possible, household survey questions are asked the same way to each participant. Some Ghana staff expressed uncertainty that M&E Animators would be appropriately educated to carry out the
translation duties, yet the Capstone team observed that this may be an opportunity to build capacity in the community.

Use of the iPod touch technology presents an additional challenge to reliability and validity. The Capstone team noticed mixed reactions to the iPod touch technology. During the field-testing of the household survey, the enumerators did not explain the role of the technology. To build rapport with the community participant, enumerators can use the technology as an icebreaker. For example, one participant appeared quite nervous during the household survey as the survey enumerator fumbled to become accustomed to the touch screen technology and conferred with the program officer on technology and translation issues. Once the enumerator asked to take the community partner’s picture and showed her the result, she visibly relaxed. Household survey enumerators should take the time to engage the community partners in the process, explaining all aspects of the process to them, and what is happening during pauses and breaks in the survey. This will engender a sense of trust with the interviewer and facilitate honest answers.

A final challenge to reliability and validity of the household survey is the external participation of several community members. Community members not participating in the interviews should not be allowed to intervene in the discussions. During the field-testing of the household surveys, small groups of community members often observed the interview sessions and at times offered advice to the individuals being interviewed. On several occasions the observers even chided the answers of the respondents and significantly swayed the responses provided. THP thus needs to provide specific instruction for the enumerators and animators on how to properly deal with such obstructions to interviews. Overall, clear and precise instruction can empower the enumerators and animators to deal with potentially complicated social issues that arise in the field in a systematic and organized manner.
Revising the Household Survey

After concluding the field test, the THP-Ghana staff informed the Capstone team that several of the questions, codes, and/or prompts were confusing and at times irrelevant for the local context (see Appendix F for the full discussion notes). Such contextualization will change from country to country and presents a challenge for THP-Global, particularly in the comparison of collected information.

In its current state, including the revisions, the household survey is an unwieldy instrument that may not be gathering the data it is intended to elicit, i.e. verifying the indicators. During the survey revision, the THP-Ghana M&E staff and the Capstone team felt several questions did not relate directly to the global core outcome indicators or were repetitive. With the number of questions currently anticipated across all modules, the survey would take several hours to administer. The beta household survey contained approximately 120 questions, which one team was able to complete within a half-hour and the other team was unable to complete. Neither team had sufficient time to complete the survey and obtain consent within the half-hour timeframe. This was likely complicated by the unfamiliarity of the survey questions and data collection technology. As THP’s time goal is for the survey to be administered in one hour, significantly revising and reducing the survey to the most essential questions will help achieve that goal and reduce survey fatigue among community members.

Figure 5

Tips for creating household survey questions:

Avoid Inadequate Wording

Instead of asking, “why did you last see a doctor”, ask, “what was the medical problem or reason for which you most recently went to a doctor”.

Make Meanings Consistent for All Respondents

Ask the respondents the same question, and also make sure that all respondents understand the question to mean the same thing. Marriage may be defined differently by two different families. Family may mean immediate family or all members of a household.

Avoid Double Barreled Questions

Only ask one question at a time. A double barreled question forces the respondent to answer two questions at once, and the answer may be impossible. For example: “Do you and your husband want another child?” In this question, you may not want another child, but your husband may wish to have another one. Splitting the question into two separate questions allows a more accurate response.

Avoid Implicit Negatives

Implied negatives, such as restrict, forbid, restrain, outlaw, oppose, can be missed by the respondent, who may provide the opposite response. Instead of asking, “Do you oppose increasing the size of community garden”, ask “Do you favor or oppose increasing the size of the community garden”.


The Global office should match each and every question with an indicator(s) to ensure that all of the questions are necessary, especially in the context of using the iPods. M&E country staff should work with THP-Global to develop questions for the household survey to also measure their country-specific outcome indicators. THP should allow ample time for an iterative process of revision of the global survey questions across all countries where the household survey will be administered. Sitting down as a group and collectively reviewing the results of the field visit and further refining data collection instruments can foster the creation of ideas. Revisions of the household survey and other instruments must be done directly after the field tests. The household survey should continue to be refined, however maintaining a country context is essential and thus a globally standardized approach must be balanced with measures of country-specific contextualization. It is vital for THP to maintain such a balance, taking into account local contextualization in the development of data collection instruments, while also keeping globally consistent standards across all program countries.

To address these issues, THP should create a basic standardized household survey to be administered across all countries. Each country should then develop 15-20 questions to address its country-specific indicators. THP should provide guidelines for reviewing and revising the household survey in each country. For example, they could include a “Tips for Creating Household Survey Questions” as demonstrated in Figure 5. This participatory approach to developing survey questions will increase the capacity of country staff to eventually design household survey questions around their own country outcome indicators.

Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews

Facilitators asked community partners to comment on their expectations for participating in the Epicenter project. Partners showed great enthusiasm in discussing their participation with THP, reporting they had expected to build a health clinic, library, food bank, and a community-supported corn miller to process food. Partners noted they had realized many of those expectations by participating in THP activities and now had a health clinic, a library and a community center. The community also had a microfinance program and several training programs for community partners.

Facilitators asked participants to comment on their perceptions of gender roles. The discussion was lighthearted, but responses were orderly with very brief answers. Participants responded that women’s traditionally expected roles were to sweep, cook, fetch water, wash clothes, and carry farming tools and equipment to the farm plots. Women were not expected to contribute in public meetings and girls did
not traditionally attend school or play football (soccer). Community leaders commented that as a result of their participation in THP, women now contributed in public (which was clearly demonstrated through their participation in the focus group discussion), and men helped to carry things and participated in the cooking and washing duties. The participants saw these role changes as opportunities to improve their marriages.

THP-Ghana country staff asked participants to separate into male and female groups to elicit further detail concerning attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about gender roles. The two female members of the Capstone team observed the FGD with the women, and the two male members observed the discussion with the men. A THP employee led the discussion in each group. Both groups experienced animated discussions; respondents were eager and willing to provide opinions on all questions asked. In the female FGD, a translator was present to convert the conversation into Twi.

The focus group of males moved through the semi-structured interview guide quickly. Men appeared more relaxed and made jokes. The facilitator followed up on several questions. Several men spoke at length, and men seemed to build upon previous responses. The facilitator provided reports to the Capstone males on the discussion after a question had been exhausted.

The qualitative data collection instruments were more challenging than quantitative data collection and analysis for the THP-Ghana M&E unit. When preparing for a focus group discussion, the M&E unit initially created a survey-like questionnaire with yes/no questions, essentially making the questions into a quantitative tool. When the Capstone team inquired about this, M&E staff indicated that this kind of questionnaire corresponded with the means of verification specified in the Ghana outcome indicator matrix. Qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis serve two different purposes; THP should take care to ensure the use of appropriate methods to elicit the desired data. For example, an indicator for gender equity is “Percentage of women in leadership roles within the community”, but the data collection tool suggested is focus group discussion, which cannot be used to accurately measure numbers (See figure 7 below).
THP-Global should work with staff across all countries to review and educate on the purpose of qualitative data collection methods, and adjust the outcomes indicators’ means of verification accordingly. Quantitative methods in data collection ask what has changed or how much something has changed, while qualitative data collection goes beyond the what and how much and allows organizations to understand why or how a change has occurred. This is done through in-depth conversations with members of the community studied. Done properly, the interviewer can guide the natural diversions of conversation to elicit detailed information.

Key informant interviews offer a chance to gather data from a wide variety of people with first-hand knowledge of the community. In KII, participants are considered experts, as they have the richest experience with the community. Their words are the actual data; how the participants describe events or situations and their perspectives provide insight into the how and why of change.

Similarly, focus group discussion gathers community feedback and comments to gauge how and why change occurs. Focus group discussions are used in conjunction with key informant interviews because the words as well as the interactions serve as data. Facilitators observe how the group describes events or phenomena as well as how group members interact and respond to ideas, providing rich data to triangulate general views of the community. Figure 6 above details when to use qualitative methods of data collection.

KII and FGD discussions will provide an extra level of depth for THP M&E, which will allow the staff to make educated decisions about programming. Through KII and FGD, THP could learn that in certain communities, women typically do not speak in public, and that this social norm is a major impediment to women in leadership roles. Program staff will then be able to cater programming to address this issue.
When working with the Ghana staff to create a semi-structured interview guide for the field test in Ankoma, the group realized several quantitative indicators called for verification through qualitative methods such as KII and FGD. Below are several examples of quantitative indicators that list a qualitative data collection instrument as a means of verification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/Impact Indicator</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Data Collection Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of women in leadership roles within the community</td>
<td># of women in leadership roles</td>
<td>FGD and Key Informant questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of women seeking redress when their civic, legal, or sexual rights are violated</td>
<td># of women who had their rights violated (civic, legal, sexual, domestic), # of women who sought redress (formal, informal)</td>
<td>FGD and household survey data (data disaggregated by age)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratios of girls and boys share household responsibilities equally</td>
<td>Set of 3-5 qualitative questions to be determined by program staff</td>
<td>FGD and during a household survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of women with access to secure land rights</td>
<td>3-5 qualitative questions (to be determined by program staff)</td>
<td>FGD and during a household survey</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

When working with the Ghana staff to create a semi-structured interview guide for the field test in Ankoma, the group realized several quantitative indicators called for verification through qualitative methods such as KII and FGD. Below are several examples of quantitative indicators that list a qualitative data collection instrument as a means of verification.

THP should create a guide or manual for country staff to properly frame and write both focus group discussions and key informant interviews. THP should also train the staff in more qualitative data collection and analysis.

When creating the focus group discussions and key informant interview guides, it is imperative to write, test, rewrite, and test again the questions multiple times. Such repetition qualifies the purpose of the instruments and helps clarify potential inconsistencies that can arise in the field. The testing process also assures that the questions are illuminating the correct information, which will provide the insight needed on the topic being discussed.
Figure 8

Qualities of a Focus Group Discussion Facilitator:

✓ Should be able to deal tactfully with outspoken group members.
✓ Should be able to draw opinions out of quieter members.
✓ Should be very well-knowledgeable about the project.
✓ When selecting a FGD facilitator, be cognizant of hierarchy – if a person feels like they’re answering to a higher up, will change his/her responses.
✓ Should be able to spontaneously continue conversation.

THP-Ghana will need to use M&E Animators as Focus Group facilitators because the current THP-Ghana staff mainly consists of men. Female community partners will need to conduct female FGDs. During the field visit, the Capstone team felt that the presence of men during the FGD inhibited some women from full expression and at times seemed slightly uncomfortable, although the women appeared quite animated and participated. M&E Animators will need to be trained on FGD methods, objectives, and goals. See Figure 8, qualities of an FDG facilitator.

A potential challenge of conducting the FGD is the need of THP-Ghana staff to be inclusive of the entire pool of potential participants. Staff expressed that allowing only certain members of community partners to participate in the discussion could potentially alienate community leaders not involved. This suggests that THP may need to work out a method of breaking larger groups of potential FGD participants into smaller, more manageable groups, so that all members are included.

Focus Group Discussions need to foster communication and dialogue. FGD loses its merits if participants give short, one-word answers. Often, asking follow up questions to shorter answers can yield fruitful and informative results. FGD leaders must be as unobtrusive as possible, and allow the conversation to run naturally.

The enumerator leading the discussion must clearly state what the FGD is, and also explain the purpose of the discussion within THP’s larger context. It is important

Figure 9

When conducting a Focus Group Discussion, make sure to:

✓ Set the tone – fun and a time to feel good
✓ Make sure every participant is heard; draw out quieter members
✓ Get full answers – e.g. if someone says we need more workshops, have them elaborate. What for? Are there other ways they could resolve the problem they’re implying that they think the workshop would solve?
✓ Monitor time closely
✓ Keep the discussion on track “That’s an interesting point. Let’s come back to topic X”
✓ Head off exchanges about opinions and individual items not on the agenda of the FGD.
that the partners are aware of their community’s role within the Pilot, and the consequent importance of their answers and participation in the discussion.

**Standardization**

Another occasion where standardization arose as an issue was during the testing and revision of the HHS. Interference from onlookers during household surveys is difficult to manage; THP must develop standardized solutions to common issues arising during survey implementation. THP must first identify potential problems, and then create prompts that explicitly provide directions on how to work around such issues. Throughout the week, the Capstone team noted conversations concerning the standardization of the pilot project for fairness and accuracy of comparison across countries. During the iFormBuilder training, one staff member had several concerns over standardization. Of particular interest was the idea of fairness across countries. For example, if Ghana hired enumerators to conduct data collection, the staff member felt that every other country should also do the same to create validity. He liked the idea of hiring Ghanaian university students as enumerators because this would help prevent bias in the results, since the students would act as external evaluators. The discussion also raised the issue of fairness across THP countries. The staff member felt that because Ghana has substantially more Epicenters, the pilot will most likely have exponentially larger costs. THP should consider methods of tracking expenses and costs of the pilot project, and determine ways for all countries to have external enumerators collect HHS data.

**Database Analysis**

Throughout the week the THP Ghana staff voiced several concerns about data management and analysis for the pilot project. The training and data management and analysis review activities prompted the most discussion. During the training, several staff said they wanted a clear data management system that could be easily accessed by any of the staff, but others voiced concern over access, citing that this could compromise the data. A consensus formed that the M&E unit should be the only ones who were able to add or edit data, and conduct analysis of data. Other staff in the organization should be able to view the data and any analysis conducted by the M&E unit. A few others wondered if iFormBuilder could be integrated into THP’s Intranet Project, and whether using iFormBuilder could compromise the Intranet’s security. The Capstone team allayed these fears, as no link between the web platforms exists currently.
The M&E unit's current data management and analysis system is impressive given the tools (mainly Excel) with which they are working. The M&E unit uses sophisticated Excel spreadsheets to track program outputs. The M&E unit has to maintain data sheets separately because THP-Ghana must keep track of the scale-up epicenters separate from the original epicenters. The unit also keeps detailed monthly records on each epicenter. They also provide quarterly reports to the Global office. To upload the quarterly data required the M&E staff print out their spreadsheets and enter the data by hand into the Intranet website. The complex data management requirements often prevent intensive data analysis, such as regression.

During the review, the Capstone team asked the staff what they would love to see in a data management and analysis system. The M&E staff said that a comprehensive, standardized practice for data entry, management, and analysis. Staff members were excited particularly at the prospect of iFormBuilder, and wished there were a similar application that exists for qualitative data collection (there is not). To ensure that global and country staff can compare data easily, the staff felt that THP should establish a standardized data management system for the global indicators. One staff member noted that if a software company could give him the ability to do data analysis simply, it would be "amazing". He noted that the M&E unit should be able to type in the name of an epicenter and see all of the data for that epicenter. He reasoned, "this is what happens for the accounting department, why not M&E?" He also commented that he "loved the idea of iFormBuilder" because it makes data entry so simple. He felt that a data management and analysis system should look to use this same perspective; we "need to look the end of the process." The staff felt that with a kit program or a custom data management system, staff would need to be trained to use it properly. They feared that a custom system would be too expensive, and that a kit would be too simple and difficult to adapt. THP should explore a database system tailored to the needs of the outcome pilot project.

As mentioned elsewhere in these results, staff also requested further training on the function and analysis of qualitative data collection methods. The GW capstone team reviewed processes for qualitative data analysis and will continue to follow up to suggest additional resources and training. A particularly useful book largely regarded as the gold standard in qualitative methods is Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches by John W. Creswell.
Communication

Strengthening communication will be essential for the pilot project to be a success. The pilot project requires sharing and collaborating on large amounts of work and information across cultures and geographic space. THP Global does an excellent job at using clear, jargon-free language in their verbal explanations of processes to country staff as well as encouraging communication through the Intranet Project, e-mail, Skype, and via phone.

The GW capstone team found that THP-Ghana staff understood the fundamental importance for M&E: the ability to show the Epicenter project’s impact and secure more funding. The role of M&E for improving programming should be reiterated and understood by all the staff and communities participating in the pilot. The global office should take care to review and reiterate the M&E outcomes pilot design processes, and procedures to underscore the capacity-building aspect of the program. Even after these topics have been introduced to the Ghana staff, THP-global should continue to discuss them with a didactic approach, not necessarily assuming full knowledge on the part of the country staff. For example, the global office often referred to VCA without having introduced the concept to the Capstone team. Lacking that information impeded full understanding of the project.

While it was in the cultural profile of the Capstone team members to ask questions when we did not understand, the Ghana country staff communicated more indirectly. Staff rarely questioned program aspects to avoid coming across as challenging, but continued working under assumptions. For example, the country staff was uncertain of whether or not a control group would be used for the pilot project and

**Figure 10**

**Developing Active Listening**

The Capstone team encourages THP to set into place a process when passing information to country staff, asking a series of questions to ensure that everyone has a similar understanding of the concept/problem:

- ✓ Describe me your understanding of this project
- ✓ What is the purpose of it
- ✓ What is your role in it
- ✓ What do you need to be successful in this project in your context?

When problems arise, a similar line of standard questions can help clarify cross-cultural barriers to describe and interpret the full breadth and depth of the comprehension of the problem:

- ✓ What do you think caused the problem?
- ✓ Why do you think it happened?
- ✓ What do you think we are doing to address it?
- ✓ What are the results you hope to achieve by addressing the problem?
had been working on focus group discussion questions under the assumption that there was a control group. The Capstone team noted that the program design did not seem to call for a control group, and Carolyn was more than happy to answer this question.

In another example, the Capstone team noticed that it often took asking the right question to determine whether staff has complete understanding of a concept or project. While in Ghana, the Capstone team also noticed Ghanaians will occasionally defer to those they perceive as in a higher position, but this may prevent valuable and useful information from being shared. Another example is the household survey. Both the global staff and the country staff felt that questions could be omitted because they were not essentially asking what THP wanted to know. Communicating what information is essential will help streamline the process and provide both the global and country offices with more meaningful, rich data.

To mitigate the risks of miscommunication and misunderstanding, THP should encourage all staff to adopt a practice of “active listening” (see figure 10), paraphrasing the information that a person has just communicated to demonstrate understanding. Communicating the same information across several modes of communication (written/audio/visual) can reinforce processes and concepts. Encourage country staff to speak up when they come across a phenomenon that they would consider unusual in their culture, which may expose lack of understanding that would not otherwise be understood as a lack of understanding.

South-South Collaboration

THP’s lines of communication seemed strong between the global office and the country office. This same sense of collaboration among countries can reinforce capacity building, encourage idea-sharing and innovation, and foster a sense of solidarity among THP partners. For example, the M&E unit expressed a desire to increase communication and collaboration among the M&E staff across countries. They felt that this would allow them to build a rapport, troubleshoot problems, and share solutions and innovations for the pilot project. Given the strength of the THP partners we encountered, such cross-country collaboration can only fortify the pilot project. South-south collaboration aligns with the partnership vision of THP, encouraging country staff to work with self-reliance. In addition to in-person meetings, THP-Global staff can cultivate use of the intranet among country staff by introducing country staff virtually and promoting connections and similarities between those staff members, e.g. “John and Jane, you’re both working on developing indicators for your country; you probably have a lot to talk
about in this process.” Encourage staff to use the iPod touches and post video diaries of their work and progress.

THP can improve its feedback mechanisms at the community level; THP-Ghana staff offered several excellent suggestions. Posting epicenter checklists in the communities will help community partners know what they are striving to accomplish through THP programs. While the staff holds feedback meetings with the community, they would like to host meetings specifically to discuss the indicators and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Canvas signs with reports and depictions of program goals and successes can effectively display information to the community.

**Timeline and Planning**

Several aspects of the field test suffered from insufficient time and planning. THP administration must create planning timelines, working backwards from particular goals to establish realistic workflows and building in extra “buffer” time to anticipate unexpected occurrences. Committing to a timeline and following through is extremely important, particularly for the global office.

**Vision, Commitment, Action (VCA)**

Staff referred to VCA as a means of community mobilization. On the THP website, VCA is described as initial workshops to prepare the community for the epicenter, but THP discussed the concept in broader terms. The VCA framework is a way to engage community members and allow for them to be included in the participatory model of THP development model. THP staff generally refer to VCA as a well-established concept, assuming comprehension of the concept.

VCA was an effective means of drawing the community together. The Ankoma epicenter community staff were well-prepared for the visit by the Capstone team and the THP Ghana M&E unit. The M&E Officer was poised and relaxed, commanding attention and respect from the community. Collaboration among the different levels of partners evidenced strong investment in THP.
The clear articulation and emphasis of THP’s commitment to integrated and participatory programming attracts staff invested in the philosophy. One staff member explained that he learned about THP through an internet search. The epicenter strategy’s holistic approach to development encouraged him to apply for the position. “Most NGOs just take part of the issue. THP takes part in everything, which makes a difference,” he described. This motivation extended to community partners as well. During the focus group discussion, men at Ankoma responded that they had seen the positive changes in other communities and wanted those changes for the villages in the Ankoma region, even if it meant changing existing social norms.

Those staff who are aware of the M&E outcomes pilot express enthusiasm at being involved. “It’s an exciting time for THP-Ghana,” a program officer noted. THP can maximize its partnership and motivate partners at all levels by clearly articulating the larger picture of the M&E pilot. Many program staff members were unaware of the outcomes pilot. Country staff leadership has questions and concerns about the long-term strategy based on the implications of the training. Involving leadership in the long-term strategic planning can allay these concerns and emphasize the participatory value of THP. Staff members expressed that they would like a more complete understanding of the big picture of what is going on: [we] “need to look at the end of the process,” they said. THP’s global office can more explicitly broadcast the reasons why M&E is important, and how everyone within the THP community fits within the M&E model. Such explanation should stress the importance of the individual actors within THP structures and link those individuals to the success of THP and its goals. When staff understands the pilot project as an integral piece of the overall strategy, comprehending its significance and role, they will be better able to contribute as innovative project leaders. This is particularly true of program staff and community partners, who were generally less aware of the M&E pilot than the M&E unit and country directors.

Staff feels that taking the time to build up VCA prior to building an epicenter is important. Usually the community comes together over a period of 2-3 years prior to building an epicenter. This time is important, because it builds capacity and also engenders solidarity and a feeling of mutual obligation and social cohesion within the community.

**DISCUSSION**

The THP-Global and Ghana offices will use the findings from the process evaluation conducted by a Capstone team to inform their Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project, scheduled for implementation in early
July. The Capstone team recognizes this is a limited time frame within which to implement all of the recommendations contained herein. The Capstone team has attempted to provide continuous feedback throughout the process to allow THP to begin integrating changes and recommendations and to ensure the team provided a useful evaluation. In this section, the group would like to mention limitations of the evaluation, reiterate the importance of capacity building and partnership as THP’s major strength, and draw conclusions.

**Limitations of the Process Evaluation**

During the process evaluation, the Capstone team experienced several challenges and limitations, which provide insight into the overall validity of our findings and offer considerations for pilot project planning and/or planning for future student group work with THP.

**Time Constraints**

Having only five business days in the field limited findings. This time constraint presented obstacles for training and testing, and collecting and processing information while in the field.

Despite relative facility with the technology, the staff training in iFormBuilder took much longer than expected. Truly understanding and mastering the use of the tool requires “play” time with the iPods. While the group anticipated this requirement, the actual time needed was far greater. Hands-on activities required additional time and allowing time for feedback from staff on the potential benefits, practical applications, and shortcomings gave invaluable insight into how to implement best practices.

Staff is the most valuable resource in the M&E pilot. Allowing ample time to incorporate their feedback and suggestions into the pilot will fortify participation and capacity building.

Time constraints limited the field test. Because the global office did not provide the beta household survey until the morning of the field test and the Capstone team had only provided the training the day before the test, the M&E staff did not have time to adjust to the data collection tools and practice the survey questions. This may have confounded our results. Having only one afternoon in the field limited the number of times we could test the survey questions and data collection tools.

Achieving the technical objectives (training, tool and instrument testing and revision, database analysis) consumed the majority of our time, leaving less time for process evaluation data collection, including informal interviews of THP staff and community members. When navigating in a foreign country,
everyday experiences took more time than scheduled. The Capstone team often stayed late at the office, and would plan to get more work done in the evenings, or at the very least review the day and observations made in a formal way. However, because transportation and acquiring food took large portions of our evenings, the Capstone team was often only able to discuss the day during meals in a less formal way. The team was only able to triangulate notes and findings in a formal, systematic way upon return to the United States.

Maintaining Focus and Limiting Scope

Maintaining the focus and limits of the scope of our work proved difficult. In several instances, the conversation drifted to concerns staff had that were outside the scope of our work and capacity to address. THP-Ghana staff often asked us questions that we could not answer; conjecture about possible answers drifted the conversation to possible solutions. On occasion this tendency precluded defining the full extent of problems instead of trying to solve them. The team mitigated the impact of these issues in several ways. Focusing the discussion on the problems at hand helped to clarify some of the issues. The Capstone group found standing up or asking the THP-Ghana staff to stand up and using a flip-chart or whiteboard effective to draw people away from their computers and help keep discussion on topic. We often found ourselves referring back to our objectives as laid out in our Terms of Reference, and going back to the pilot M&E matrix to clarify questions. The group also maintained and referred to a formal agenda everyday to keep focus and pace.

Methods

THP-Ghana staff expressed confusion that the GW capstone methods would be applied to the pilot project itself, rather than the Capstone evaluation. To distinguish the Capstone terminology from the THP methods, the Capstone team re-phrased parts of its methods and clarified the terms in a meeting with the Ghana staff. Due to time constraints, the group found it difficult to execute the number of interviews desired. Most of our data collection occurred informally and was not formally triangulated until after the trip. Community partners only provided verbal informed consent, which was translated by a THP-Ghana staff member. The Capstone team simultaneously tested iFormBuilder as a data collection method and the household survey as a data collection instrument. This confounded the ability of the Capstone team and staff to discriminate results from each.
Communication

Communication presents opportunities to enhance programming and bridge cultural divides. Overall, the group felt communication was high and we found relative ease and openness of communication between the team and all THP staff, and among the staff themselves. The team did experience some difficulty in eliciting detailed information. The Capstone team found The GWU semi-structured interview guide useful because it framed different ways to ask the same question without being leading and narrowed the scope of our evaluation. Several prompts framed differently resulted in more detailed information sharing, which proved essential for our analysis later. The Capstone team also learned more about different cultural modes of communication, particularly indirect communication. Ghana staff members tended to communicate not only through words, but also through the context of the situation, using non-verbal cues to express meaning and leaving the listener to fill in the blanks. Some of the strategies we recommended in the results section helped to bridge the divide between direct and indirect communication.

Imperfect Information

One of the greatest challenges leading up to the fieldwork and during the fieldwork was preparing for unknowns. For example, leading up the visit, the GW team had little knowledge on the level of actual staff facility with technology. The training was designed for no understanding of touch screens and iPods, but once we arrived, we found several of the staff were familiar with touchscreen technology. The Capstone team lacked some key information (such as a finalized household survey and any knowledge that tools such as iTalk would be used) and cultural experience before hitting the ground. To mitigate these issues, the team attempted to prepare for the worst-case scenario; however, this often resulted in wasted time and efforts. The group could have improved communication with the THP staff before the trip, but in reality this was limited by time and uncertainty of how to best frame the questions given a lack of experience with the Ghana staff and Ghanaian culture.

Capacity and Partnership

The capacity and partnership of the organization are its major strengths. All of the staff encountered were enthusiastic about THP and invested in the philosophy and goals of the organization. Staff avidly expressed interest in the new data collection technology introduced by the Capstone team. THP-Ghana staff conveyed genuine excitement about using the technology to collect data in the field. Staff also expressed interest in further communication and collaboration with Monitoring and Evaluation officers.
of other country offices. Staff expressed pride that THP had invested in their professional development by providing the new technology. Fostering this sense of community and organizational pride can help continue the professional growth of the staff. For example, the THP-Global can encourage staff to take time to take trainings online during work hours and suggest topics and specific trainings through Khan Academy and Lynda. The GW capstone team will continue to be in touch with THP Ghana during the pilot to offer suggestions and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the GW Capstone team was honored to have participated in the process evaluation and to have contributed to the pilot. Even from our limited engagement with community partners, we saw impressive benefits to participating in THP’s integrated approach to combating food insecurity by providing community members with the tools to become agents of their own development. We anticipate that if THP takes time to test the survey, address appropriate data collection methods for the respective indicators, and train enumerators, interviewers, and M&E animators, the data collected in the Outcome Pilot will produce data that is significant and relevant to the broader development community. We encourage THP to publish and publicize their work as leaders in the field of development.

On a personal note, the team was grateful to have participated in the program and to have received the support of the Global and Ghana country offices. Staff’s enthusiasm and investment in the program inspired our work. The Capstone project reaffirmed our commitment to development work by exposing us to a model that appears to be working.
PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION: OVERVIEW AND PRACTICES
Prepared for
The Hunger Project

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APPENDIX A: GW Capstone Team Preliminary Research Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction
The Hunger Project (THP) is a global, non-profit, strategic organization committed to the sustainable end of world hunger. In Ghana, THP has implemented its Epicenter Strategy with the goal of ending hunger by and poverty by empowering people to lead lives of self-reliance, meet basic needs, and build better futures for their children. The Epicenter Strategy targets four underlying determinants of hunger and poverty: marginalized women food farmers, lack of leadership capacity, underinvestment in building people’s capacity in rural areas, and gender inequality fuelling the AIDS epidemic.

To tackle these conditions, the Epicenter Strategy works in clusters of rural villages to integrate programs in health; education; adult literacy; nutrition; improved farming and food security; microfinance; water and sanitation; building community capacity, and self-efficacy. Addressing these issues through a holistic program, the Epicenter Strategy moves beyond traditional, service delivery-oriented development work. Instead, it integrates work across sectors, emphasizing community participation to improve quality of life, economic viability, and environmental sustainability.

Currently, THP has mobilized more than 100 epicenter communities in eight countries throughout Africa. Twenty-one of those epicenters now function independently of THP both financially and logistically, underscoring THP’s emphasis on locally-empowered, sustainable development. Continuing its early successes, THP has implemented a Scale-up Epicenter Strategy to replicate cost-effective epicenters that mobilize communities as agents for grassroots change.

Objective of This Report
This report describes the preliminary research conducted by the IDS Ghana Food Security Capstone Team, and presents information the Team found germane to the THP-Ghana outcome pilot project. The authors introduce participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) and THP’s outcome pilot project approach. After providing a broad overview of sampling and data collection for qualitative and quantitative evaluation, the report concludes with key lessons from case studies of data collection in practice.

Overview of Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation
Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E) works with community actors to manage projects, perform self-assessment, strategize and assess organizational goals, and build capacity. In traditional, top-down M&E, external organizations act as experts to predetermine indicators of success based on ostensibly objective metrics that measure results for finders. The impetus for monitoring and evaluation is largely for accountability and to garner further funding.

In contrast, PM&E engages community stakeholders as experts who are invested in their own development. They generate and conduct M&E, while the program director merely guides the process. (Issel 2009) M&E aims not only to improve program understanding, but also to transform the working relationships between the donor, project management, and target community by including each group into a wider scope of evaluation. (Bamberger et al. 2006)
This focus on community participation and empowerment forms the foundation of THP’s approach to PM&E. From the outset, THP incorporated PM&E into the Epicenter Strategy by involving community members as stakeholders and experts integral to the success of all stages of the project. Community participation includes determining and prioritizing the community’s needs, planning activities to address those needs, managing the project, and setting the monitoring and evaluation criteria. Through their active participation, community stakeholders drive a unique and relevant vision of success.

Emphasis on community participation moves beyond solely quantitative, performance-driven measures by incorporating qualitative methods, including focus groups and in-depth interviews. Direct feedback drills down into how and why, not solely what and how much, indicators did or did not lead to outcomes and impact. This methodology aligns with the THP mission by empowering Ghanaians living in conditions of hunger and poverty to be the primary agents of their own development. Strengthening the skills needed to participate and actively monitor their own progress forms an integral component of program success and sustainability.

PROGRAM DESIGN OF EPICENTER OUTCOME EVALUATION PILOT

Overview and Objective of Pilot Outcome Evaluation Project
To determine how program outputs have been translated into outcomes, THP has launched a Pilot Outcome Evaluation Project. The objective of the pilot project is to field test, review, and revise the data collection tools and new outcome indicators in two African countries – Ghana and Malawi. THP is currently in the process of determining a set of core global programmatic outcome indicators. THP M&E officers, global program staff, field staff, and key community members guide the process to refine core outcome indicators, gather data, and analyze data to report outcomes.

Once the pilot evaluation is completed, the revised data collection tools and indicators will be scaled up and implemented on a larger scale across THP’s programs.

Guiding Tools: Theories of Change Model and Logical Framework
In order to successfully transition from outputs to outcomes, THP relies on the Theories of Change and Logical Framework methodologies as guiding tools. The Theories of Change (ToC) model graphically demonstrates linkages between inputs, activities, outputs, and the resulting outcomes, while also mapping out the preconditions required to achieve program goals. ToC methodology helps to map change, parsing out the causal pathways leading to household and community level changes that have occurred as a result of participation in the Epicenter Strategy, i.e. outcomes. Employing ToC methodology facilitated THPs successful development of core outcome indicators at a global level by
outlining how program accomplishments and interventions can produce long-term benefits (outcomes) for individuals and communities. With ToC as the primary evaluation tool, THP uses the Logical Framework Model to clearly illustrate the logic flow between outcomes, inputs and activities.

The outcome evaluation pilot will test and revise program materials directly linked to these two evaluative tools. Ghana’s large size, high level of program participation in the Epicenter Strategy, and field staff already acquainted with data collection tools makes the country an excellent location to pilot field testing for outcome indicators and data collection tools. The Ghana M&E staff assists the global office in determining country-specific progress indicators and will be primarily responsible for carrying out field-testing and data collection.

Outcome Indicator Matrix
THP’s Outcome Indicator Matrix outlines program areas, its goal, expected outcomes, key monitoring questions, outcome and impact indicators, means of verifying those indicators, respective data collection tools, sources and timeframe for each program area, baseline data, and targets. The global office and local field staff finalizes a set of core global outcome indicators, which they then use to measure program results in Ghana and Malawi. Each country then adds country-specific outcome indicators relevant to programs carried out in that particular setting. They then develop and field test a set of standardized data collection tools in five randomly chosen epicenters in each country. Once these data are tested and collected, the results will be compared between Ghana and Malawi, the pilot countries.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION
THP’s outcome evaluation pilot relies data collected from household surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviewing. This section outlines sampling strategies as well as these data collection tools.

Quantitative Data Collection and Probability Sampling
Quantitative data generally describe who, where, how much, and what is occurring around a particular event or program. They can be measured and used to repeat program results in other settings. When collecting quantitative data, such as results from household surveys, evaluators are trying to describe how an intervention will work in a target population, the group that will benefit from the intervention. Since it would be inefficient to survey everyone in the target population, evaluators create a sampling frame, a listing of the population from which the evaluators can draw a representative sample. A single element of the sample is called the sampling unit. (Issel 2009)

The target population of the outcome indicator pilot is Ghanaians suffering from hunger and poverty. The sampling frame is all of the participating epicenters. To evaluate how well the data collection tools
work, THP will choose a representative sample of epicenters using various methods of *probability sampling*. Program evaluators use probability sampling with quantitative monitoring and evaluation so that they can accurately measure changes and compare them to other groups to determine whether the program is having the same effect in different populations. Probability sampling involves systematically randomizing a sample, or portion, people, households, or units (the sampling frame) that adequately represent the whole of the population so that outcomes of an intervention can be generalized to the whole population. (Bamberger 2009) Using probability sampling reduces *bias*, or outside influence on the results. (ibid)

**Simple Random Sampling**

To shape the initial sample population, THP used *simple random sampling* (SRS). SRS allows the initial sample to remain small, using fewer staff resources, time, and money so that the pilot remains cost-effective. In SRS, all members of the population – in this case, the participating epicenters – had an equal chance of being chosen. Five epicenters were selected randomly and then matched with a counterpart epicenter in the other country to use as a basis of comparison. This basis of comparison is called a *counterfactual*, which helps evaluators to estimate socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, or other factors that may have changed the results in a given setting. (Issel 2009) By comparing the two groups, THP can determine whether the outcomes that the evaluators observe can truly be attributed to the Epicenter Strategy.

![Simple Random Sampling Diagram](image)

**Two-Stage Cluster Sampling and Probability Proportional to Size**

Once the participating epicenters have been identified and matched, THP will need to determine what villages will participate, and what households within those villages will participate. This uses a more complicated form of sampling: *two-stage cluster sampling using probability proportionate to size*. This form of sampling works better than SRS when evaluators need to carry out a large survey across a broad geographic area and when the sample frame listing all of the units in the population is impossible or costly to obtain. (Bamberger 2009)

In each epicenter catchment area, THP will list out all of the possible participating villages. These are sometimes referred to as enumeration areas (EA) or clusters. From these clusters, THP will randomly select a number of villages to participate. These are the primary sampling unit (PSUs). In each of the selected villages, THP will then list out all of the households, which becomes the sampling frame for each PSU. THP will then randomly select households from each PSU. The chosen households are the secondary sampling units.

In order to be generalizable to the larger population, each unit in each sampling frame needs to have an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample. A problem occurs in two-stage sampling. Suppose an evaluator selects both first and second stage units (village and then the household) using simple
random sampling. She then takes the same number of households per village. Households in larger villages would be less likely to be chosen for the sample than households in smaller villages. The solution to this is to use *probability proportional to size* (PPS), so larger villages are more likely to be selected. Then select the same number of households from each PSU.

**Household Surveys**
Household surveys are a data collection tool to quantitatively assess program outcomes. An interviewer, or enumerator, sits with a member of the household (usually the head of the household) and asks a series of prewritten questions. All enumerators ask all participating respondents the same questions in the same manner. It is imperative that the data collection is uniform in order to increase the reliability of the answers and ensure that any different answers between respondents stem from differences in what the respondents have to say.

**Reliability and Validity**
In order to describe the general population, surveys must be reliable and valid. Reliability refers to consistent questions and answers. When two different respondents are in the same situation, they should respond to the question in the same way. This consistency allows program evaluators to know that any deviations in answers come from what the respondents have to say about the situation, not from a flaw in the way the question was asked.

Validity ensures that the survey question measures what it is intended to measure. Compromises to validity often stem from lack of knowledge and social stigma and not wishing to answer the question. Therefore it is important for the questions to be as reliable as possible and allow the enumerator an opportunity to establish rapport and a sense of ease and trust with the interviewee.

In a household survey that maximizes reliability,
- The enumerator’s question-and-answers are entirely scripted so the respondent is fully prepared to answer a question;
- Each question means the same thing to every respondent;
- The enumerators communicate the kinds of appropriate responses to the question consistently to all respondents.

**Variables**
Household surveys try to quantify responses by gathering them using four different kinds of variables, which help ensure that the data collected truly measures what it intends to measure. Consider four different kinds of measurement variables:
- *Nominal*: people or events are sorted into unordered categories, e.g. male/female
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- **Ordinal**: people or events are placed into ordered categories along a single dimension, e.g. “rate your health as poor, fair, good, excellent”
- **Intervals or discrete**: people or events can only take on a limited number or evenly spaced, distinct values between a defined minimum and maximum value, e.g. number of children in a family household, number of patients in a hospital ward, cell count, etc.
- **Continuous or ratio**: people or events can take on an infinite number of evenly spaced values between defined minimum and maximum values, e.g. blood pressure, age, height, weight

**Types of Questions**

Household surveys typically allow *closed* survey questions, in which a list of acceptable responses is provided to the respondent, such as “yes/no”, “1-5, 6-11, 12-16”. A commonly used closed chain question is the *Likert scale*, which asks respondents to order their response on a five-pointed spectrum. For example:

How do you rate the overall quality of service at the medical clinic (check one response):

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

In contrast, open response questions allow the respondent to choose his or her words to answer the questions. Because of the wide level of variability in open-ended questions, they are very difficult to quantify, so evaluators generally prefer to use closed-ended questions in household surveys.

**General Rules for Household Survey Questions**:

- **Less is more!**
  - The respondent probably hasn’t thought about these questions in the same level of detail as you have; put yourself in their position
  - Focus the question so that it gathers only one piece of information
  - Carefully word the question to avoid misunderstanding by the respondent
  - Test the question in focus groups

- **Pay Attention to Wording and Flow!**
  - KISS: Keep it short and simple, no more than 20 words. If you need to use more, break them up into a series of KISS questions.
  - Know how the question should be asked: written? Orally?
  - Know if the interviewer has additional instructions, which are written in CAPS with the question
  - Understand the layout of the questions: Usually general questions come first and help build rapport, sensitive questions come later.

- **Test Questions in Focus Groups**
  - Look at response rates to see which questions people have difficulty answering
  - Check skip patterns (e.g. If you answered no to this question, skip to number 17”)
Electronic Data Collection Tools
Handheld smart phones and other mobile devices have recently been adopted into the data collection industry. According to the World Bank, mobile phone coverage could be extended to cover 97% of the African population without public subsidies, making mobile phones a cost-effective tool already in use. At the forefront of this industry is iFormBuilder, a mobile data collection and analysis software that can be downloaded onto many common mobile handheld devices (e.g. iPhone, Android, etc.). Automated data collection tools such as iFormBuilder allow enumerators to customize the software to quickly collect data in the field using customized software for the specific project. The recent growth in global availability of smart phones and the reduction in hardware costs have placed the smart phone as an ideal technology to help improve the accuracy of data collected and reduce the time taken for the data to reach the intended stakeholders.

Approaching Household Surveys as an Integrated Team
Each member of the survey team is integral to ensuring successful data design, collection, and analysis. Integrating the team’s activities provides reliable and timely databases, immediate feedback, uniform criteria, and ensures quality results. These results can then be taken to the community and other stakeholders to make program and policy decisions with accurate information about what the program is really accomplishing. When any piece of the data management team falters, the whole process loses quality. If the questions are not carefully designed and tested, interviewers will become frustrated and will not be able to collect the desired information. If interviewers do not follow the script, they may collect inaccurate or wrong data, which has to go through a lengthy and tedious process of data “cleaning”. If data analysts do not clean data, users will not trust the data, and may call for further evaluation, taking precious resources away from project activities.

Limitations of Household Surveys
Household surveys are excellent at gathering data that can be quantified to tell program evaluators who, where, when, and how much of a particular event is occurring. This information can be used to generalize across different populations to expand the scope and reach of programs. Limitations of household surveys include gathering data on how and why an event is occurring, over-reporting and underreporting, accurately remembering events in a particular frame of time.

Qualitative Data Collection and Sampling
Qualitative data help evaluators understand how and why a particular event or phenomenon is occurring in a particular setting. While qualitative data cannot be generalized to other settings, they are important to help evaluators understand specific aspects of a program. This is particularly important in process and outcome evaluation to understand how and why activities were implemented, particularly if they deviate from the program design.

To understand how and why an event is occurring, evaluators turn to qualitative evaluation tools, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups. While these data are not generalizable to a larger sample population, they help program managers to understand why certain effects may be taking place. THP employs a mixed method approach to data collection: they gather quantitative data through household surveys, and they gather qualitative data through focus groups and in-depth interviews.
Non-Probabilistic Sampling
When gathering data qualitatively, evaluators use non-probabilistic sampling. Most focus group discussions use purposive sampling, selecting participants because they can inform the understanding of the topic to be discussed. (Creswell 2003) Several different types of purposive sampling may be used. For focus groups, the most often types of sampling include maximum variation, which documents diverse variations and identifies important common patterns on one subject among a group of heterogeneous people, homogeneous sampling, which focuses, reduces, simplifies, and facilitates group interviewing among one group of people, and sampling, which focuses, reduces, simplifies, and facilitates group interviewing among one group of people, and typical case sampling, which brings in members of a group who are seen as a typical case or average representative of their group.

Group Interviewing
Group interviews take advantage of a group dynamic to probe questions and encourage discussions that may reveal information not gathered through quantitative data collection. It can be a more efficient way to gather information than a series of one-on-one interviews. Interviewers select a group of topics prior to meeting with participants. A group leader facilitates discussion by asking open-ended questions around these topics. Data is collected by extensive note-taking or using audio recording.

Types of Group Interviews (Crotty 1999)
- Natural groups: a group of people who existed prior to the interview, such as households, micro-credit members, collective garden members
- Community interviews: a participatory method that empowers community members by encouraging them to actively participate
- Focus group discussion (FGD): the most common type of group interview, where 6-10 people from similar and different backgrounds are brought together to discuss a given topic. For example, THP plans to use focus group discussion to understand community members’ perceptions of leaders who are successful in addressing community concerns.

In the outcomes evaluation pilot, THP will employ FGD to understand perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about a specific evaluation topic or project. A facilitator will ask questions from a semi-structured interview guide. In contrast to the household survey, it is less important for the facilitator to read from a script and more important for the facilitator to learn as much as possible from the participants, who are seen as experts on their topic.

Limitations of focus group discussion are that the results cannot be broadened to describe the general population. While FGD is an excellent tool for describing norms and how groups of people interact, it does not take place in a natural setting, the interviewer has little control over the setting, and the ease of conducting FGD can lead to its use in improper circumstances. Furthermore, FGD requires a high level of training and expertise on the part of the facilitator. FGD generates huge amounts of data that must be triangulated with other data; to be truly useful, this data analysis can be time-consuming and require extensive human resources to provide legitimate results.

FGD generally relies on segmentation sampling to have a broad representation of participants. In segmentation, the facilitators select a demographic for inclusion, such as rural women, rural men, urban women, and urban men, and then segment them against a series of indicators, such as health clinic client, private clinic client, or traditional healer client. (There may be crossover in the group). There
should be at least two groups for each background variable. Using segmentation requires that the facilitators know the key indicators, know participants’ context, and have the resources and social stature to be able to recruit participants.

**In-Depth Interviews**

During in-depth interviews, facilitators have repeated, face-to-face encounters with key participants who are likely to provide expert information, ideas, and insights on their experiences. *Key participants* are seen as experts by the community and the most reliable source of information on a given topic. Key participants are often gatekeepers between program management and the community. In the outcome evaluation pilot, THP will train animators to interview with a semi-structured interview guide. They will collect the responses from these interviews and share with program staff.

The interview guide lists general issues and interesting topics based on the study objective. While it allows for standardization, the guide is continuously revised as more information is learned from participants. Part of collecting data in semi-structured interviews includes transparency from the animators on how the information was actually obtained – what questions were asked specifically?

Interviews take place in a natural environment and usually begin with an informal chat. Animators link the purpose of the interview to a common purpose or interest, and obtain consent, if necessary. While the interview itself seems loosely structured, the flow of the interview is critical to establishing rapport with the participant and gathering rich data. Questions should reflect the logical flow of the discussion. Animators start with the easiest and least threatening questions to more complex and interesting ideas. Each question should be pursued to its logical conclusion without neglecting new questions or ideas. Respondents may construe a question differently than expected; in these cases, animators should ask the questions in more than one way, if possible.

Follow-up questions move the interview to a deeper level by asking for more interview and demonstrate that the animator is listening and interested. Animators should try not to anticipate follow-up questions, waiting for the response before formulating new questions. Use probes, such as “tell me more about X”, “What happened before/after X”, “mmm-hmmm”, etc. to clarify points, indicate a level of detail, and maintain balance between gathering detail and being intrusive.

The tone of the animator is critical to the success of in-depth interviews. Animators must take care to show that they come without a judgmental attitude or pre-conceived notions, and that they will honor and respect the participant’s confidentiality and trust. In-depth interviews often use *snowball* sampling to identify cases of interest from people who know other participants who know what cases are rich with information, as well as *opportunistic* sampling, which follows participant leads to take advantage of opportunities that arise (Creswell 2003).

**DATA COLLECTION IN PRACTICE**

**Creating a Data Collection System**

To monitor the Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project, THP has created and continues to refine a data collection system. This section outlines guiding principles for creating a data collection system and
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provides THP with additional resources on case studies, best practices, and other organizations’ data collection methods.

Generally, five components guide project managers when creating and refining a data collection system (United Nations Statistics Division 2005):

1. Identifying other organizations or groups that collect similar data and defining what types of data they collect and why
2. Exploring data collection processes and tools
3. Standardizing collection methods
4. Assigning roles for data collection
5. Practicing data collection

Knowing who is collecting and how they are collecting data and how allows an organization to compare its efforts to similar programs for a more complete program assessment. To avoid duplicating efforts of other organizations and wasting time, it is critical to learn which data other organizations have already gathered. Understanding the methods an organization uses to collect and analyze data will allow a more accurate interpretation of those data.

Standardizing collection methods by providing detailed training and guides to data collectors strengthens the accuracy and consistency of all data collected. Equally as important, assigning clear roles for the entire data collection team and creating a timeline for the duration of the process guarantees that data are being collected regularly and recorded properly. When roles and responsibilities are not clear and resources have not been accurately assigned for data collection, conducting the data collection and entering the information can become a low priority, especially for staff with other roles.

Field-testing the data collection system allows program evaluators to troubleshoot potential problems and complications with the data collection method. It also allows staff an opportunity to practice data collection techniques, hone their skills, ask questions, and make recommendations about the project.

**Data Collection Lessons in Ghana**

Ghana has a myriad of organizations performing data collection for development projects across the country. In this section, the authors present a brief literature review of lessons learned from implementing data collection systems in Ghana. Finding information on data collection tools and processes is often difficult due to its proprietary nature. See Appendix A and B for more information on data collection in Ghana.

Oxfam Great Britain implemented an agricultural program in Ghana. In their evaluation, they present outputs to describe the number of people served by the program, disaggregated by gender. While the evaluation calls for biannual reviews to “support learning and check progress against project objectives” (Adams 2008), it reports only two such reviews as occurring during the program. The evaluation highlights that a lack of feedback and response to recommendations made by partners caused project issues to go unresolved, creating a sense of hopelessness among partners. (ibid)

Concern Universal implemented several environment and climate-change projects in the BrongAhafo Region of Ghana between 1999 and 2008. In 2011, the organization conducted a mixed-methods
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evaluation to assess the long-term impact of their programming. Fifteen villages out of 50 were selected for evaluation. Evaluators employed household surveys, direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions to collect data. The evaluation provided some key takeaways and lessons learned. When creating the sample, evaluators had hoped to choose a representative random sample and stratify that sample on several variables. Little verifiable population data was available and the sample size needed to obtain statistically significant results proved unrealistic for budgetary and logistical reasons (time, cost, and distance). Evaluators attempted to conduct interviews on a Saturday, which the community reserved for ceremonies. Consequently, many respondents were not home, reducing validity (Concern Universal 2011).

The United Nations identified several lessons learned when conducting household surveys in the field, using the case study of the Demographic and Health Survey, a worldwide household survey funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID):

- When creating the sample, enumerators found it easier and increased validity to randomize sample units in the office using an enumeration list, rather than trying to randomize in the field. This ensured that enumerators visited hard-to-reach homes. The limitation of using an enumeration list derived from census results was that they were sometimes out of date.
- Adequate training for interviewers and supervisors took approximately 3 to 4 weeks. Most problems encountered with household surveys stemmed from issues with the staff conducting the survey. Proper training prior to implementation and supervision during were essential.
- Logistics created numerous issues, requiring foresight in planning. The major obstacle to field logistics was transportation. Despite their considerable expense, proper modes of transportation, particularly vehicles that operated in remote areas, avoided delays and demoralizing field workers. Planning was also required to pair the appropriate enumerator with respondents, particularly in areas where multiples languages were spoken or sensitive information was collected.
- Ample time was needed to prepare for data entry training and implementation. Staff needed to be trained to conduct double, or parallel, data entry to help identify errors in data entry. Data entry was performed concurrently with data collection to provide prompt feedback to enumerators about problems in questionnaires (United Nations Statistics Division 2005).

Seepah examined surveys performed the Ghanaian Statistical Service (GSS), the government agency responsible for enumerating demographics, and elucidated several challenges in the data collection process. Donor-funded surveys often ran out of funding. At times, the donor funding cycle interfered with executing the survey, delaying the process and compromising the statistical validity of the sampling. GSS had not developed cost-effective methods for data collection. Questionnaires contained too many questions, making it necessary to recruit excessive numbers of field workers. (Seepah 2009)

Lack administrative oversight meant that teams were not well harmonized or coordinated. Field teams duplicated efforts while at the same time gathering data that could not be compared across regions or countries, compromising validity. As a methodology, household surveys created response bias when only the head of the household was interviewed, instead of the member of household with the most knowledge on a particular topic. Seasonality of household surveys also produced bias. For example, when surveys were conducted solely during the dry season, enumerators found bednet use much lower than if they had questioned households during the wet season as well. (Seepah 2009)
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A 2011 Working Paper by the International Food Policy Research Institute critically examined the series of household surveys conducted by GSS since 1984 to design a plan for improvement. (Munoz 2011) Their findings echoed the process issues discussed above, but also highlighted structural challenges to collecting data through household surveys. External donors funded many GSS surveys, which had funding cycles that did not align with the national development plan strategized by the Ghanaian government. To maximize the usefulness of survey data, donors and survey planners should collaborated with the government to conduct the survey the year prior to creating the national development plan so that those data could be incorporated into the development plan. Munoz describes benefits of donor-driven surveys. Collaborating across countries elevated the standard of the data collection process. When donors pay to hire and train temporary enumerators, they do not pull already scarce human resources from GSS. (Munoz 2011)

Even when program evaluators build a data collection system on best practices, it is essential to assess commitment, capacity, and communication plans prior to implementing a data collection system. The Ghana Education Management Information System created a monitoring system for education. In the planning phase, the system was decentralized and incorporated numerous reforms, yet still faced challenges when operationalizing the system itself. Constraints on capacity and lack of communication across sectors impeded the data collection software. One of the largest challenges to success was a lack of properly trained enumerators. Instead of training enumerators, program evaluators asked teachers to collect data in classrooms. The teachers were unclear on why they were collecting data and consequently did not systematically gather data necessary to measure outcomes appropriately. “Those working at the district offices and schools just view the whole process as an administrative exercise imposed by the head office.” (Trucano 2006)

Many of these challenges can be avoided with proper planning and preparation. In an article outlining the development of a performance measurement framework of the Food Research Institute in Ghana, the authors found that using a mix of diagnostic tools to assess institutional strengths and weaknesses, potential opportunities and threats, staff and stakeholder understanding, and the organizational capacity for M&E data collection helped to strategically prepare the organization for the new M&E system. (Yawson 2006)

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Progress Out of Poverty Index (PPI) Resources
The following links contain more information on the PPI and its application in Ghana:

- List of microfinance institutions in Ghana
- PPI in Ghana
- Top Ten Challenges to the PPI

Appendix B: Ghana-Specific Secondary Data Resources
The following lists additional sources of secondary data that may be useful for testing and revising THP’s outcome indicators to provide data for triangulation and/or ensuring the accuracy of THP’s data.
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The Ghana Statistical Service, in collaboration with international donors, collects data on a variety of indicators and conducts a national census every ten years. While the most recent census was conducted in 2010, the most recent data available are from the 2000 census.

Initiated by the World Bank’s Living Standards Measurement Study in 1987, the Ghana Statistical Service has collected nationwide data from household surveys, Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS), in 1987/88; 1988/89; 1091/92; 1998/99; and 2000. The most recent GLSS funded by the World Bank was in 2000. Since then, the Ghana Statistical Service has undertaken a more recent survey, in 2005, Ghana Living Standards Survey 5 (GLSS5). The latest report of the GLSS5 survey can be accessed through the Ghana Statistical Service website.

The World Bank performs a Global Standards Measurement Survey, which can be found on the World Bank Web Site.

The guide to the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) 1995 is available on Google Books.

In 1997 and 2003, the Ghana Statistical Service conducted the Ghana Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire Survey at the national, regional, and district levels. The government uses this key monitoring tool to assess government-sponsored programs that tackle poverty and vulnerable populations.

The Ghana Statistical Service also executed the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey in 2003 and 2008 in partnership with USAID, Ghana Health Service, Ghana AIDS Commission, UNICEF, UNFPA, and DANIDA. Other surveys included the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MIS), Labor Force Surveys (LFS), and other Agriculture surveys.

Yale University’s Economic Growth Center (EGC) and the Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana’s Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER) are conducting a 15-year study in partnership with THP and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The study is referred to as the GLSS5+ because it builds off of the fifth round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS5).

The Yale Economic Growth Center provides online resources pertaining to the EGC-ISSER survey, including survey instruments and questionnaires.

The Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana website provides information on the GLSS5+ and the Farmer Based Organization (FBO) surveys.

Information Regarding the MCC Compact Project

FBO Ghana also has information on Ghanaian Farming Based Organizations

Ghana also has several networks and forums for Monitoring and Evaluation and professional data collection, which may be helpful with context specific best practices and guides:

- Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum (GMEF)
Appendix C: General Secondary Data Sources

World Bank
The World Bank e-Library is an online, fully cross-searchable portal of over 4,000 World Bank documents. The collection consists of over 1,600 World Bank publications and over 2,400 Policy Research Working Papers, plus each new book and paper as they are published. The collection includes all official World Bank publications dating back to 2000, and contains helpful links to the latest World Development Reports and World Development Indicators.

World Development Indicators (WDI) is the primary World Bank database for development data from officially-recognized international sources. The database provides most recent statistics on development indicators organized by country and global region. Searches can be performed by several criteria, including by country or indicator. Global Development Finance (GDF) provides external debt and financial flows statistics for countries that report public and publicly-guaranteed debt under the World Bank's Debtor Reporting System (DRS).

Africa Development Indicators (ADI) is one of the most detailed collection of data on Africa, containing over 1,600 indicators, covering 53 African countries (including Ghana) and spanning the period 1961 to 2008. Data include social, economic, financial, natural resources, infrastructure, governance, partnership, and environmental indicators. The ADI Data Availability Query shows where data is available for a given country, series, indicators and year.

United Nations Statistics Division
The UN Statistics Division provides an overview of statistics and data collection in Ghana, highlighting the functions and current state of the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) - the country’s main statistical agency.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) e-Library collection provides access to the books, journals, and statistical databases of the OECD, gathering information on the economics, politics, and international affairs of member countries. Publications include country studies, forecasting publications, reports, periodicals, and socio-economic databases. Statistical data can be downloaded as Excel files.


ProQuest
ProQuest Statistical DataSets (formerly known as the Lexis Nexis Statistical Datasets) provides access to statistics on a wide variety of topics produced by Federal agencies, states, and intergovernmental organizations. Searching by “Ghana” yields multiple reports and data sets.

ProQuest Statistical Insight provides access to statistics on a wide variety of topics produced by Federal agencies, states, and intergovernmental organizations.
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Yawson, Robert et al. (2006) Developing a performance measurement framework to enhance the impact orientation of the Food Research Institute, Ghana. R&D Management(36) 2, 161-172.
List of Additional Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Literature:


Fred Carden and Sarah Earl, Outcome Mapping Building Learning and Reflections into Development Programs. (2001)


Zsuzsa Varvasovszky and Ruairi Brugha, How to do (or not to do)... A Stakeholder Analysis (2000), Health Policy and Planning.

Internet Resources:
State Department Table of F Indicators (http://www.state.gov/f/indicators)
World Bank Development Indicators (http://www.data.worldbank.org/indicator)


Beyond 10 Years

**LONG-TERM OUTCOME**

- Good living conditions in partner communities
- Effective and accountable institutions
- Many new businesses
- Good schools, water, sanitation
- All partner households live on 3 square meals a day

**10-YEAR OUTCOMES**

- People and communities are self-reliant (Can-do mentality)
- Communities initiate and complete projects
- Communities identify viable projects
- Byelaws enacted and enforced
- Local resources are mobilized (with massive participation by partners)
- Liaison with other MDAs and/or NGOs
- Active participation by community members
- Effective partnerships between partner communities and their local gov't bodies
- Emergence of committed leaders

**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES**

- Good leadership structures are in place
- Community members engage in viable economic ventures
- Elected leaders collaborate effectively with traditional leaders/rulers
- Leaders organize regular and effective meetings
- Leaders involve community members in decision making
- delegates duties to involved community members
- Gender equality in allocation of leadership positions
- Gender-sensitive allocation of leadership positions
- Women take up leadership positions
- Women take up leadership positions
- Gender-sensitive allocation of leadership positions
- Women take up leadership positions

**SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES**

- Proper food storage facilities are available
- Sustained availability of food
- Diverse crops
- Large, productive farms
- Increased enrollment and retention of girls in school
- Partners adopt modern agronomic practices
- Partners engage in viable economic ventures
- Access to economic resources for business ventures
- Parents give equal opportunities to girls and boys
- Education on nutrition and food security
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation

**STRATEGIES**

- Mobilize community
- Partnership with local government
- Effective partnerships between partner communities and their local gov't bodies
- Emergence of committed leaders
- Strong collaboration among communities
- Epicenter committees
- Liaison with other MDAs and/or NGOs
- Active participation by community members
- Effective participation by community members
- Effective participation by community members

**FREQUENT VCA WORKSHOPS**

- Microfinance
- Reduction in household chores
- Access to economic resources for business ventures
- Parents give equal opportunities to girls and boys
- Education on nutrition and food security
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation

**WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

- Women's Empowerment
- Parents give equal opportunities to girls and boys
- Increased enrollment and retention of girls in school
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation

**LOCAL CONSTRAINTS**

- Emerging of committed leaders
- Strong collaboration among communities
- Epicenter committees
- Liaison with other MDAs and/or NGOs
- Active participation by community members
- Effective participation by community members
- Effective participation by community members

**TARGETS**

- Many new businesses
- Good schools, water, sanitation
- Community participation in decision making
- Gender-sensitive allocation of leadership roles
- Women take up leadership positions
- Gender-sensitive allocation of leadership roles
- Women take up leadership positions
- Women take up leadership positions
- Gender-sensitive allocation of leadership roles
- Women take up leadership positions
- Gender-sensitive allocation of leadership roles
- Women take up leadership positions

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Proper food storage facilities are available
- Sustained availability of food
- Diverse crops
- Large, productive farms
- Increased enrollment and retention of girls in school
- Partners adopt modern agronomic practices
- Partners engage in viable economic ventures
- Access to economic resources for business ventures
- Parents give equal opportunities to girls and boys
- Education on nutrition and food security
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation
- Increased interest in/support for women's participation

**EPICENTERS**

- Emerging of committed leaders
- Strong collaboration among communities
- Epicenter committees
- Liaison with other MDAs and/or NGOs
- Active participation by community members
- Effective participation by community members
- Effective participation by community members
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE
For
GWU Outcome Evaluation Pilot Project (OEPP) in Ghana
(Target Group: Key Informants)

Introduction (instruction to interviewer):
Interviewer briefly introduces the purpose of this community survey followed by the OEPP project brief.

Date of Interview: ______ / 03 / 2012

Interviewer’s Name: ____________________________

Duration of Interview: Start time: __________________ End time: __________________

A: Profile of Key Informant:
Key Informant (KI) Name: ____________________________ Title: _______

How long has the interviewee been living in this community? ______ year(s)

Type of KI: _______ Market women
_________ Farmer
_________ Government worker
_________ Health worker
_________ Teacher
_________ Community leader (specify position: ____________________________)
_________ Others (Specify: ____________________________)

B: Questions to Key Informant:
1) Did you know of the Hunger Project/Epicenter Initiative before this meeting today?
   (a) Yes (b) No

2) If yes, what were your expectations of the project (Epicenter Initiative)?

3) Which of these expectations have materialized so far?

4) Tell us more about the roles of men and women in your community? How are those roles performed? Can you give us examples of how these roles are respected or challenged?

5) What have you learned from the THP epicenter about roles between men and women?

6) In your personal opinion have the roles of men and women changed as a result of mobilizations organized by The Hunger Project’s Epicenter Initiative?

________________________________________________________

<End of Key Informant Questions>
Appendix D: Outline for Enumerator Training Manual

Enumerator Training Manual Outline

Introduction
• THP Intro (big picture)
• Objectives of Enumerator Guide
• Intro/Background to Pilot
  o Importance of M&E
• Roles/Expectations of Enumerators
  o What should enumerators anticipate?

Data Collection Overview
• Brief Intro /Overview of Instruments
  o Purpose and context of HHS, FGD, Key Part Interviews
  o THP Role in OEPP
  o Indicators
  o Mixed Methods Approach
  o Skills in facilitating
• Sampling
  o Probabalistic
  o Purposive
  o Choosing participants in the field
• Research Ethics

Conducting Survey Instruments
• Household Surveys (HHS)
  o Instrument (paper HHS)
    ▪ How to ask questions
    ▪ Reliability and validity – importance of enumerators role in maintaining these
    ▪ Asking questions and recording answers (doing it systematically in the same way)
      • Role play (play both the enumerator and interviewee roles)
      • Exercise in answering the right and wrong way
    ▪ Participants
  o Tool
    ▪ iPod Touch
    ▪ iFormBuilder
    ▪ Garmin
• Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
  o Instrument (questions)
    ▪ How to ask questions
    ▪ The importance of encouraging discussions
    ▪ Reiterate skills needed to facilitate discussion
    ▪ Participants
  o Tool (iPod)
    ▪ iTalk
      • Role play
      • iTalk as recording device (backup to your field notes)
    ▪ Field notes/documentation of major ideas
• Key Informant Interviews (KII)
Appendix D: Outline for Enumerator Training Manual

- Instrument (questions)
  - How to ask questions
  - How do deduce your own questions (inductive reasoning)
  - Participants
- Tool (iPod)
  - iTalk
    - iTalk as a recording device (back up to your field notes)
    - Can be transcribed later
  - Field notes/documentation of major ideas

Field Work
- Preparation
  - Dressing appropriately
    - Simple (don’t want to look strange to them, not too distant from them, but also not shabby)
  - Making you packed everything in the morning (checklist!)
  - Synching up before you go
  - Food and drink
    - At times it may not be available – be prepared!
    - Lots and lots of water – hot!
- In the field
  - Interacting with participants
    - Building rapport; “Wehdidi” (WEH – DEE DEE) – ability of eating – have you eaten?
  - Length of Interview
    - Expectations of interview
  - When things go wrong!
    - Respondent issues
      - What to do when asked for favors/money
    - Getting lost
    - Rain
    - Crowd control (interference of others in interview, onlookers, etc.)
    - Technology
    - Remuneration - avoid accepting food or water from participant; do not ask for anything. Don’t drink for suspect sources.
- Tips for interview
- Exit Strategy
  - Excusing yourself
  - Double checking consent forms
  - What to do with incomplete surveys
    - Coming back

Deliverables – What to do when you come back
- Sync iPods
- Report on each field visit
  - How many households surveyed
  - Issues or questions that arise
- Debriefing with team leader
Appendix D: Outline for Enumerator Training Manual

- Data entry in case of iPod failure

*Practical Section
- Checklist
- Survey Instruments
  - Script
    - Will need to interface closely with iPod touches
  - Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
    - Questions
  - Key Informant Interviews (FII)
    - Questions
- Contact Info
- Emergency Info/Procedure
- Glossary
- FAQs
- Reminders to be AWESOME!
# Appendix E: Capstone Team Agenda in Ghana

**Agenda: GWU Field Visit  March 12-16, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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| Monday, March 12th | THP-Ghana Country Office Accra, Ghana  | 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.   | • GWU Capstone Team                              | • Introductions & Welcome remarks.  
• Review Agenda  
• Presentation on THP – Ghana Programs  
• Discuss Evaluation Methodology  
• Open Discussion/Questions  
• Review and update M&E Animator Manual |
| Tuesday, March 13th| THP-Ghana Country Office Accra, Ghana  | 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.   | • GWU Capstone Team                              | • Review data collection tools  
• Orientation on iPod Touch and iFormbuilder software  
• Outline Enumerator Training Manual  
• Open Discussion/Questions |
| Wednesday, March 14th | Epicenter Visit (Ankoma Epicenter) | Depart Accra 8 a.m.  
Return Accra 4 p.m. | • GWU Capstone Team  
• THP-Ghana Program Officer  
• THP-Ghana M&E Officer  
• M&E Animators, Epicenter Leadership | • Epicenter Tour  
• Meet with M&E Animators  
• Observe and Evaluate pre-test of Household Survey  
• Focus Group Discussion (if time permits)  
• Open Discussion/Questions |
| Thursday, March 15th | THP-Ghana Country Office Accra, Ghana  | 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.   | • GWU Capstone Team                              | • Debrief on epicenter visit  
• Discuss revisions to data collection tools  
• Evaluate data analysis systems  
• Other |
| Friday, March 16th | THP-Ghana Country Office Accra, Ghana  | 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.   | • GWU Capstone Team                              | • Discuss next steps  
• Evaluation interviews with THP-Ghana staff  
• Wrap-up  
• Open Discussion/Questions |
Appendix F: Discussion Notes of Field Test in Ankoma

Notes on Discussion of Field Visit
March 15, 2012
GW Capstone Team - Ghana

General Issues:
- Not enough time to read and learn the household survey before testing
- Who is being surveyed
  - Throughout the survey, the request to find the person most knowledgeable about an issue seems vague/problematic
    - How does the enumerator find this out?
    - Do they record who reported this information if it was not the primary respondent?
- Having really clear instructions for the enumerators for EACH question will help them to have the same answer for all the surveys
- By accident some questions on the iPod were skipped
  - Possible to miss a sub-form
- Community leadership followed us around to watch
  - Some actively criticized/added to the respondents responses
- Woman was worried about time when she saw the document
  - For the iPod the respondents were not so worried about time
- How will THP select the households for sampling
  - Sampling could be an issue – is it really random?
  - Need a strategy for selecting households for the enumerators
  - Need to go on days that the community is going to be available
  - Need M&E animators to help select the households?
  - Going to every n\textsuperscript{th} house? Maybe the Garmin could come in handy?
  - Magellan could show you the spread of the households to ensure that people are visiting a good spread of the village
  - Every enumerator should have a GPS device
- Ideally, field test the survey, then field test the iPods and then field test both
- All units should be checked to make sure they are specific enough or have a conversion chart (hard and time consuming to do math on the spot)
  - Offer a selection of units again?
  - Revenue needs to be defined (maybe read to the respondent)
- Clear instructions on skipping questions
  - Why it is important not to
  - What to do if you need to skip a question
  - What questions to absolutely not skip
- How will the data be made anonymous?
- TIME is a major issue
- Going to need training plus practical time for working with the iPods
- For the Gender Questions – may need to have a female enumerator/animator
- Reference ID
  - How will this be done?
Appendix F: Discussion Notes of Field Test in Ankoma

- iFormBuilder can be used to generate unique reference id?
  - Make it so that each number refers to a country and a number of the survey?
  - The informed consent page should also have the respondent ID on it
    - Closing statement of the survey
      - Solomon (Ankoma APO) suggested it was good at asking people to “take their leave”

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY/iFORMBUILDER

- Informed Consent
  - In the first instructions there is a type-o
    - Should read: “…in the language of the interviewee”
  - Language on what the iPod is and how it records data should be included
  - Francis and Emma told the respondents that it was a “cell phone interview”
    - One respondent seemed to think that the students were taking down the information, and it was not happening on the iPod
    - Some of the respondents seemed ill-at-ease about what was happening on the iPod, especially when the surveyor was recording observed information
  - iPod should have instructions to ask for the informed consent at the beginning

- Definition of Household and Respondents
  - Primary and Secondary respondents
    - Should they both be interviewed at the same time?
    - Are these also the heads of households?
      - Need to specifically state who is the head of the household, even if its redundant
    - This is NOT on the iPod, which was a problem
      - Ghana specific – Head of household is not usually female
        - Will be hard for enumerators to understand or implement
        - Can another person fill in as a proxy for the head of household?

- Instructions:
  - Location of interview needs to be directed
    - Does the interview need to be done at the household?
      - Instructions should state this
      - Most interviews will probably happen outside of the house making observations difficult
      - One interview occurred at the person’s “shop” so we had to ask where the home was
  - Instructions to participant – explaining the iPod touch? Giving instructions for all the answers
    - Both women were ill at ease, especially about the money questions
    - Hard to tell what issues were just the survey itself
Appendix F: Discussion Notes of Field Test in Ankoma

- What is the paper survey and what is the iPod
  - Maybe the paper and iPod surveys should be field tested independently to make sure the survey questions
    - “Most knowledgeable” is an issue
      - How does the enumerator identify this person?
      - Do you have people “playing musical chairs” during the survey

- Module B:
  - Do you focus on the person who is the female head of household only, or are you supposed to ask both?
    - The instructions on the paper survey say to ask both, but not on the iPod
    - Concern from Francis that usually you only find one head in the household
    - Is it necessary to ask these questions to both?
    - Who is the head of the household? (who is primary and secondary?)
      - Automatically, a man is supposed to be the head of the household – “the provider”
      - Culturally, you would really not meet a woman who says that she is the head of the household
    - What happens when the husband is travelling
    - The instructions need to be clear on both the iPod and the paper survey
    - If one member is not there, what do you do in that situation.
    - Terms of “primary respondent” and “head of household” should be consistent throughout the survey.
    - What if the Head of Household was traveling and someone else sat in as the male head of household? (e.g. the eldest son – this happened in one of our interviews)
    - One group did not even take data on the other gender head of household because it was not listed in the instructions of the iPod (emphasize BOTH on paper as well)
  - Not clear who the secondary respondent is
    - The “other head of household” could also be
    - B03: Code 1 a term for spouse but this is also referred to as the secondary respondent? This is confusing.
  - Woman said we should pay her for remembering all the ages members of the households
  - SUBFORMS did NOT work for secondary respondents and beyond

- Module C: Dwelling characteristics
  - iPod did not have the prompt to observe the questions
  - Enumerators may need to ask the questions about the dwelling instead of observing
    - One interview the woman was in her shop. It is also awkward to just be silent and not talk for a few minutes in the middle of the interview
Appendix F: Discussion Notes of Field Test in Ankoma

- Had to ask about the number of rooms for one of the interviews
- Possibly enumerators need to make sure that the respondents are met at their house (included in instructions)
- However, Francis and Emma think that respondents will most likely not invite you inside – usually the survey will be done outside
- Possibly dwelling observations should be at the end
- Need to do more pre-testing with a COMPLETE survey
  - How long does it take to get to nearest primary school (by car? Walking?)
  - How do you enter a response like (about thirty minutes)
  - Defining what are school fees?
    - In Ghana you have free education, so what do you mean by this?
  - UNIT(S) (Conversion and/or recording different area units)
    - Should be options
    - Maybe the iFormBuilder software could convert?

- Module D:
  - Separating the man and the woman can be tricky – it is possible but problematic
    - Enumerators may be uncomfortable telling men they want to speak to the spouse alone
    - Have to tell the man why you want to talk to the wife separately
      - Don’t just say that you want to talk to the wife
      - Tell the man what you will be talking about
    - Instructions should be CLEAR on the iPod
  - What should the enumerator do if the head of household is not home?
  - D:01 D:01b
    - The wording should be changed? (He/she to You)
    - If you are trying to emphasize being a man/woman by “like yourself”
      - Maybe should be “As a man/woman do you feel that you can generally…”
  - D04a/b
    - Double barreled – should be two questions
  - D05a/b
    - Triple barreled – should be three questions
  - D06
    - Separate into two questions – subcommittee and committee so that we have more information on this
  - D08 – D10
    - Double barrel – separate these out

- Module F:
  - F01: Define “school”
  - F03: Define school expenses
  - F05: Is this trying to see if THP has had an influence on this?
  - F06: (pg. 9) “Is your child supported by THP?”
    - At this epicenter there was no program like this – should be an option that is not applicable
Appendix F: Discussion Notes of Field Test in Ankoma

- **F07 and F08**: the time and mode of transportation need to be clear
  - On the iPod there should be a less specific way to record time
    - Respondents responded with 10 or 15 minutes
    - On iPod the option was down to the second
      - Maybe have 0-5 minutes, 5-10, 10-15?

- **F09 – F10**: F10 should come first
  - F09 it should be attended/attending – not just attending (do you want in the past or just now)

- **Ordering could be better**

**Module G:**
- **G01b**: An option for units should be on the iPod as well or perhaps some quick conversion reference
- **G05**: No option to specify which crop on the iPod which the paper asks you to do
- **G06**: Define profit (so it is clear vs. revenue)
  - Difficult to think of this number for the entire season/year
  - Could ask about the costs of inputs?
- **G13**: Type-O: How much has this household “maid”?
  - Possibly the “any” can be deleted (it is confusing)
- **G15**: Needs to be a N/A option because what if THP does not have a program in that community
- **G16 – G18**: “Ask this section to the female head of house or the person who is in charge of preparing food” could make it difficult to switch mid-questionnaire (musical chairs again)
- **G17**: “Going to sleep hungry”
  - Concerns of how do you answer this question
    - Many parents may lie especially when indicate children in the question – this is a bad reflection on the parents
    - Maybe just asking about the respondent about going to sleep hungry would be better?
    - Maybe asking about this in FGD will help verify this information?

**Module H:**
- **H01**: Possibly insert a question after H01
  - What kind of health center do you attend?
    - Options
Appendix F: Discussion Notes of Field Test in Ankoma

- H03
  - Options make no sense because you are already asking about the epicenter health facility
  - Does the private facility mean that it is religious?
- H04
  - This question should be moved up before H03.

- Module J:
  - Making sure the prompt to skip this question is on the iPod if the answer is NO
  - The rows should be made clear and not ask repetitive questions
  - J04
    - Revenue needs to defined and units should be assigned
    - Units on Ipod and paper need to be the same
  - Columns 5 and 6 on page 16:
    - If the person does not know, what should the enumerator record?
  - J12 and J13
    - How does enumerator answer if they have all these and not just one
    - Should be broken out
      - Select all that apply?
      - Maybe: Which of the following does your household own?
  - J16-J21 are miss-labeled as I
  - J21
    - Double – barreled question (two questions in one)
    - Head or spouse (or secondary respondent) not clear

FGD/ITALK
- radios to pick up on peoples voices
- important to have people in a circle around the iTalk so that they can all be heard well
- is it ethical to ask someone to speak up during research if you are recording?
- should be used as a way to CONFIRM field notes and what you thought were the main ideas/concepts during the FGD or Key Informant Interview