The University of Ghana, McGill University, and World Vision are working with the local District Assembly, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Ghana Health Service, and the Ghana Education Service in the Upper Manya Krobo District (UMKD) of Ghana to strengthen local resources and services that will help improve health, nutrition, economic well-being, and food security in rural communities.

**EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

Education for adolescent girls is the foundation for a healthy and successful future.

- Educated girls are more likely to have better paid careers, and they are more effective business owners.
- Educated girls delay sexual debut, pregnancy, and motherhood. In Ghana, only 1% of adolescent girls with secondary education have had a child compared to over 30% of adolescent girls with no education.
- The children of better educated mothers are healthier and less likely to die during childhood.

Unfortunately, many girls in Ghana do not finish secondary school. Although nearly all girls are in school in grade 4, less than 20% of girls complete secondary school. The school drop-out rate is higher for girls than for boys.

Poverty and gender norms, which favor boys’ education over girls’, often prevent girls from staying in school.


**NEWS FROM THE FIELD**

**Adolescent girls mothers’ education**

Among Upper Manya Krobo households, only 2% of the mothers of adolescent girls completed secondary school but both girls and their mothers agree that it is very important for girls to finish secondary school.

**Is it important for girls to finish secondary school?**

Data source: Baseline Adolescent Cohort Survey, 2014

![Chart showing the importance of finishing secondary school among girls and their mothers.](chart.png)
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

When mothers and their adolescent girls were asked if girls are as good as boys in school, the majority of girls and mothers agreed that girls are as good as boys in school. Whereas 62% of girls responded that education is more important for boys, their mothers disagreed. School is important for both!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are girls as good as boys in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls (n=1362)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is education more important for boys?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls (n=1345)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Baseline Adolescent Cohort Survey, 2014

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Nutrition Links project has developed an intervention designed to encourage young girls to stay in school. We began by interviewing approximately 1,400 girls aged 9 to 13 in three sub-districts of the Upper Manya Krobo District. With funds awarded through the RISING program at the Population Council in New York, we offered half of these girls (750) financial literacy training and a small savings account to help them cover their school-related expenses. As an incentive to stay in school, girls who remain in school the following year will receive an additional deposit in their savings account. To date, most of the eligible girls have received a short course on financial literacy from staff at the Population Council, Ghana. Group savings accounts have been opened and girls have been given passbooks to monitor their savings.

In addition, we have recruited 40 local social mentors to organize weekly meetings for 330 girls from 20 clusters of communities. During these weekly meetings girls engage in a variety of activities that address important topics such as nutrition, health, self-esteem, leadership, education, careers, and finances.

The Project is funded by the Government of Canada, through Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.

Additional funding is provided by:
McGill University, World Vision Canada, Population Council

Website: http://www.mcgill.ca/cine/research/building-capacity-sustainable-livelihoods-and-health-ghana

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