

What can be done to improve the livelihoods of women in the Volta Delta, Ghana?

Women in the Volta region contribute to their families and Ghana's economy through farming and fishing. But climate change is affecting their livelihoods through coastal erosion and salinisation of groundwater, freshwater lagoons and soils.



Impacts of climate change



Coastal erosion destroys land used for agriculture



Salinisation of groundwater, freshwater lagoons and soils reduces the productivity of the land, as plants are unable to take up enough water

This results in migration of able-bodied males in search of better lands or livelihoods elsewhere. Women left behind struggle to use available land adequately to increase economic returns and adapt to the changing climate.



Through the “Empowering women and transforming gender relations in the Volta Delta, Ghana” project, I have learnt how to make liquid soap, detergents and hand sanitizer which I can do myself and sell during the planting season. I have also learnt how to preserve and package my vegetables and fish to be able to attract more buyers, even out of my community. Now because I can get money all year round, I will be able to access micro-finance loans more easily to support my business.



I grow vegetables and also work as a fishmonger in Keta in the Volta region of Ghana. My husband leased me his land to use for vegetables when he left Keta to find better work. But the rains have become unpredictable and the tidal waves are washing away our land and making it impossible for anything to grow. Making enough money to support my family is a struggle, especially without my husband.



Daavi - an elderly female farmer in the Volta Delta.

Recommendations

The empowerment of women in the Volta region requires a holistic approach, including awareness creation, capacity enhancement and advocacy. This must be done in collaboration with traditional leaders and other stakeholders, such as the District Assemblies, to ensure greater support for the activities of women.



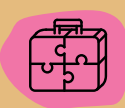
Train women in effective land-use practices and value-addition activities, e.g. improving the packaging of their products to be more appealing to the market.



Promote skills training in alternative economic activities, such as liquid soap production, to ensure a steady income, especially during the lean season.



Support women's groups to access microfinance by linking them with rural banks and financial institutions.



Build the capacity of women to manage the operations and economic returns from their livelihood activities.



District Assemblies/local government must work to **formalise women's livelihoods groups** and provide needs-based capacity building.



Traditional Authorities must **ensure increased participation of women in decision-making processes** in order to highlight and help address gendered livelihood challenges.



All stakeholders, including district assembly officials, traditional rulers, women groups and private institutions should **advocate for government and state agency support** towards social and behavioural change on efficient land use and economic empowerment options in the Delta.



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How can we improve the capacities of women in the Volta Delta, Ghana, to use their land effectively?

For women in Ghana to be more resilient to climate change, their access, use and control of land and other agricultural resources are essential. These resources ensure that women are able to meet their day-to-day needs, especially when faced with climate change impacts such as coastal erosion and salinisation of soils and freshwater lagoons.

However, due to the enforcement of gender roles and the traditional practice of patrilineage, women lack the skills and capacities for effective land use management.



What is needed?

The empowerment of women in the Volta region requires a holistic approach, including awareness creation, capacity enhancement and advocacy. This must be done in collaboration with traditional leaders and other stakeholders, such as the District Assemblies, to ensure greater support for the activities of women.



Training and awareness raising on effective land use practices and alternative livelihoods such as liquid soap making.



Training and capacity building in value addition: This includes cassava processing and enriching gari with orange flesh sweet potato; enhanced packaging of fish and other farm produce such as tomatoes and pepper to ensure its appeal to the market.



Training women in business management and entrepreneurship: This would have a positive impact on the women by ensuring they are able to save money to support their family and other economic activities.



What did women in the Keta and Sogakope districts identify as priority areas for training?

Keta

Value Addition

How to improve the storage, packaging and marketing of their processed food products

Business Management

Keeping good records of business income and expenditure

Business Financing

*Financial management and bookkeeping
Access to loans without land as collateral*

Sogakope

Business Financing

*Business management and savings skills to enable them to save enough, purchase land and access bank loans
Access to loans without land as collateral*

Women's Empowerment & Leadership

*Forming and maintaining group associations / cooperatives
Women's leadership and empowerment*



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