General Project Information

**Project Title:** Promoting Women’s Property and Inheritance Rights through Advocacy to Eliminate Gender Inequality and Reduce HIV and AIDS in Ghana

**Organization:** People’s Dialogue on Human Settlements (People’s Dialogue – Ghana)

**Implemented in:** Accra, Tamale, Apam and Takoradi

**Grant Amount:** $65,000

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Context

Ghana has approximately 260,000 persons living with HIV, about 150,000 of whom are women. Ghanaian women living with or affected by HIV and AIDS suffer from stigma and human rights violations, including denial of their property and inheritance rights. For example, after the death of a husband, disputes over land, housing and other property are common, often resulting in the widow being dispossessed of her home. Under Ghana’s **1985 Interstate Succession Law**, male and female children of a deceased person are entitled to an equal share of the estate. However, customary laws continue to prevent women from inheriting marital property.

Objectives

PDG seeks to reinforce national legal and policy frameworks so that women can fully enjoy their property and inheritance rights. PDG also builds capacity of government, policy makers, the media and other stakeholders, and empowered women, girls and their advocates to effectively claim their property and inheritance rights.

Key results

- Enhanced knowledge and awareness of 100 local authorities, 80 community level opinion leaders, and 92 community members (72 female and 20 male) on their obligations to protect women’s property and inheritance rights. Over 200 policy papers and policy “report cards”, highlighting the gaps in existing national legal and policy frameworks on property and inheritance rights, were distributed to relevant stakeholders to encourage legal reform.

- Increased legal literacy and awareness of 24 women living with HIV about their property and inheritance rights and how to claim them.

- Enhanced knowledge and skills of 60 paralegals (33 of them female) to support women to assert their property and inheritance rights.

- Enhanced knowledge and skills of 20 members of the media to promote women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS. These journalists published articles on the issue in both print and digital media.

- Engaging the media helped to create eloquent allies in the movement for women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS. Moreover, by sensitizing members of the media, the project ensured longer term public visibility for issues of property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.

Lessons Learned

- Engaging communities in the gathering of evidence to inform policy papers and “report cards” proved to be an effective strategy. Through consultative meetings involving 200 community members in the target regions, some main deterrents for women seeking to assert their property and inheritance rights were identified, including: lack of knowledge of existing legal and constitutional provisions; high legal fees; and fear of death threats from other family members.

- It could have been more effective to concentrate on a smaller number of communities in one target area for the project. PDG feels that it may have attempted to target too many communities at once for the project activities.

Partnerships

PDG partnered with Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP) in Ashaiman and Old Fadama; Women United Against AIDS in Ghana (WUAAG); Women of Hope; Salvation Army – Kokomlemle; Society for Women Against AIDS in Africa (SWAA); Initiative for Gender Equality in Africa (IGED-Africa); Chiefs; Assembly members; Local traditional leaders; Non Formal Education Division; National Disaster Management Organization; Ghana Health Service; traditional birth attendants; and Ghana Police.

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