



Impact Report
Stories of Change
August 2022

WISE

**WOMEN'S INNOVATION AND
SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE
IN GHANA**





50-year-old Naomi is the owner of a poultry farm in a small farming community in the Bono region of Ghana.

Contents

The First Word 4

The Scene 6

The Rundown 8

Spotlight:
Q&A with Patricia 10

Spotlight:
Men for Women 12

Smashing Stigmas, Showing Support 12

The Gari Grind 13

Secret Ingredient 14

The Last Word 16



Name: PATRICIA GYAN-BASSAW

Title: Plan International Project Lead, Ghana Women's Innovation for Sustainable Enterprises (WISE),

Patricia was born and raised in Ghana and is an ardent advocate for women's rights and equality. She has more than 15 years' experience managing projects related to sustainable livelihood development, financial inclusion, child sponsorship and education.

Wise Women

When women thrive, society thrives. That's the inspiration behind the Women's Innovation and Sustainable Enterprise (WISE) project in Ghana. Investing in women's ability to earn a living inspires gender equality and helps to break the cycle of poverty.

PATRICIA GYAN-BASSAW knows first-hand how difficult it can be for women to have the freedom to earn a living. "My mother was willing to work, but because she was responsible for taking care of us, she didn't have the time to explore bigger opportunities," explains Patricia, project lead for Ghana WISE. "Women in Ghana are hard-working and ready to do all that it takes to better their lives and the lives of their families."

It's one of the reasons Patricia is an unfailing supporter of entrepreneurial women involved in the WISE project. She sees the changes that are happening with women like Sabatu and Afryea – changes that your support makes possible.

Later in this report, you'll meet Sabatu, whose husband is sharing household responsibilities so she can expand her gari business (p.13). And Afryea's husband, Chief Nana Appiah, cooks alongside her to encourage the men in his village to support women both professionally and emotionally (p.14).

Your generosity is driving these changes and more. By supporting the Ghana WISE project, you are championing women's success in Ghana. **THANK YOU** for, like Patricia, believing in their entrepreneurial potential and power.

TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S ENTERPRISES IN GHANA, THE WISE PROJECT IS:

1

Cultivating a supportive environment by shifting attitudes about gender roles

2

Helping women enhance their skillsets and financial literacy

3

Providing opportunities for women entrepreneurs to network and grow their market presence

The Scene



GHANA IS A COUNTRY RICH IN DIVERSITY, and its various cultures, vibrant cities and abundant wildlife live together harmoniously. Following nearly three decades of military rule, Ghana restored its multi-party democracy in 1992 and has since become Africa’s fastest-growing economy. Although industries like gold, cocoa and oil are booming, women often don’t have the same opportunities to thrive in these fields as they are generally expected to prioritize caring for their families over their professional aspirations.

- Women and girls aged 10+ spend 14% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 3.5% spent by men
- 46% of businesses are owned by women, but many lack the support necessary to grow.
- Ghana ranked 131 out of 160 countries on the Gender Equality Index

KEEPING BUSINESSES CLEAN AND EVERGREEN

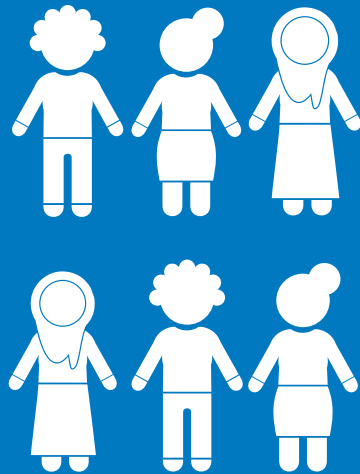
In Ghana’s agriculture industry, women make up nearly half of the workforce. But they often can’t afford – or, in some cases, aren’t allowed to own land. Thanks to your support of the Ghana WISE project, mindsets around women’s land ownership are shifting and women are gaining access to plots where they can harvest soybeans, mushrooms, snails and more!

But that’s just the beginning. The WISE project team works in tandem with the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that women use organic, chemical-free fertilizers and proper composting methods, sustaining the land harvest after harvest. “If a woman is struggling to get a piece of land,” says Patricia, “we want to make sure that when she secures this piece of land, she’s able to use it for the next five to 10 years.”



Naomi, 28, took a three-week training course and apprenticed with a professional seamstresses in her community to complete her training.

THE RUNDOWN



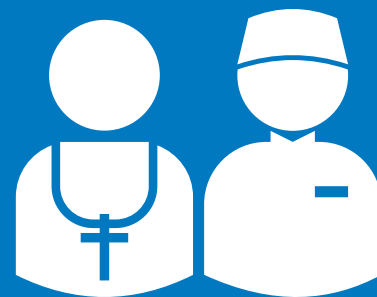
503 SAVINGS GROUPS WITH 12,582 WOMEN were formed or strengthened to build financial literacy, savings and business skills.

299 MEN

were trained to act as champions of gender equality and encourage their male friends and family members to support women in their professions.

133 RELIGIOUS LEADERS

received training on how to promote positive masculinity including topics like sharing care responsibilities, preventing gender-based violence and supporting women's economic empowerment.



24 BUSINESS ADVISORY CENTRE STAFF

attended a two-day training session on gender equality and child protection to provide women with safe spaces for holistic business support.

148 COMMUNITY-BASED VOLUNTEERS

attended a 10-day workshop to advance their understanding of the root causes of and solutions to gender inequalities in business.

20 COMMUNITIES

welcomed a pilot project to establish child-care centres – with plans to expand in the coming years – to allow working women more time to run their businesses.

“These trainings are very helpful. I have already improved my planning and budgeting skills. I have been able to draw up a six-month budget for my business.”

– Martha, a savings group member



Empowered Moves

Meet the powerhouse behind the Ghana WISE movement.



PATRICIA GYAN-BASSAW has a laugh that warms up the room. Her voice exudes confidence and kindness, especially when she speaks passionately about the professional power of women in Ghana and their dream to build their businesses. We spoke with the spirited Ghana WISE project lead to discover how the project benefits the lives of women, their families and their communities.

Q.
You have said, “When a woman thrives, all of society thrives.” How have you witnessed this?

A.
“I once knew a woman who earned a living making groundnut paste* and selling it in her community. When she was able to access a loan from the savings group in her village, she increased her production from two bowls of paste to 10 100-kilogram bags a week! Because of her success, she brought six other women on board. She became a wholesaler, and you could see the excitement in her eyes when she paid her employees.”

“Through her success, she gained respect and social capital; her opinions were sought after for matters even at the community level. Eventually, she was able to send her daughter to college to become a teacher. This is how she gave back to the community.”

“I realized that once you help one woman, it goes beyond her to other people, including the community [overall].”

Q.
What impact will the Ghana WISE project have on future generations?

A.
“Many girls are going to see a woman who is very entrepreneurial and does well in her business. Regardless of whether she has higher education or not, she’s able to excel and take care of her family. And that alone is going to be motivation for other young girls.”

Q.
What are you proudest of with the project so far, and what is your greatest hope for it?

A.
“We have built a strong foundation. We’ve instilled an understanding in women that they have a right [to economic success] and have the potential to expand their businesses. I am amazed that a number of these women have already prepared their lands; they say, ‘We are ready.’”

“The acceptance that we have had from men and community members gives women the environment or support system they need at the household and community levels to grow their businesses. For that, I am excited and hopeful that our project will achieve its outcomes in the long run.”

*Similar to peanut butter.

Smashing Stigmas, Showing Support

Ghanaian men embrace equality and support the women in their lives.



A field officer conducts training with support of community-based volunteers



Daniel and Sabatu making gari

THE GARI GRIND

Sabatu's business is soaring thanks in part to her husband's steadfast support.

“AMBITIOUS” is just one word to describe Sabatu. Sabatu has her own business processing gari – a type of flour made from ground cassava roots. Today she produces two bags a week, but her goal is to bump that to five. However, like many women around the world, Sabatu is pulled in many directions. In addition to running her business, she is the mom of six preschool-age children!

Sabatu's husband, Daniel, encourages her to pursue her business goals, but it wasn't always that way. At first, he was sensitive to the negative perception of men who help take care of their children and the household. It wasn't until

he attended a men's group organized by the WISE project that he realized the stereotypes were untrue and rooted in toxic masculinity. After that, he saw that he could do more to help Sabatu. He came to understand and appreciate her efforts to keep their family happy and healthy. He also recognized that the many hours she spent on child care and household chores meant she had to sacrifice growing her gari grind.

Now, Daniel is more than happy to share the load – he cares for their children and helps Sabatu process gari. “My support allows my wife to spend quality time on her business,” he says. “I believe that with my unflinching support, she will be able to increase her

gari production in the near future and employ other women in the community.”

Sabatu is well on her way to reaching her goal: With Daniel's support, she has already increased her weekly gari yield from two to three bags – and is keen on hitting her target of five! “If I continue to receive support from my husband, I can increase my weekly production,” she says. “This will help reduce our family's financial burdens and foster a healthy relationship between me and my husband.” Sabatu's new sense of confidence and increased income will carry her far, giving her a greater say in decisions at home and in her community.

SECRET INGREDIENT

After years of silence, Chief Nana Appiah steps out of the shadows to show support for his wife.

CHIEF NANA APPIAH had a secret. Out of sight from his community, he supported his wife, Afryea*, with her banku business, helping her prepare the doughy delicacy made from corn and cassava. As the traditional leader of his village, he was afraid he would be criticized for helping his wife because culturally it was considered taboo for men to help their wives with cooking.

After attending discussion groups organized by the WISE project, Nana Appiah felt empowered to

cook with Afryea in public and recognized the responsibility he had as a leader to shift his community's perception.

"My wife is a very humble, hard-working woman who supports me very much in my role as chief and also in my palm wine business," explains Nana Appiah. "Now I think it is time to do these good deeds openly to show appreciation for my wife for all the support I enjoy from her and serve as motivation to others."

Nana Appiah's actions have drawn praise from partner organizations of the WISE project, who hope to see similar support from other leaders. "It is not easy for a community chief to defy long-standing perceptions and norms [that go] against men's support for their wives," says David Bagonluri, executive director of the Women's Integrated Development Organization in Ghana. "We look forward to seeing more men support women's economic empowerment in the project communities and beyond."

**Name has been changed.*



A couple do household chores together



Traditional leaders are the custodians of our land, our culture and our heritage. If they change their mindset around the participation of women in decision-making, they can take a stand to change the negative norms that no longer serve us.

– Patricia



THANK YOU!

“When your hands do hard work, they don’t stay dirty forever,” says Patricia, quoting a Ghanaian proverb. “The joy is derived from seeing what you’ve accomplished.” From Patricia and all of us at Plan International Canada, thank you for your outstanding commitment to bringing joy through accomplishment for women in Ghana.



Plan International Canada Inc.
245 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M4P 0B3
Canada

416-920-1654
1-800-387-1418
info@plancanada.ca
plancanada.ca

Learn more and get involved at plancanada.ca



* CRA Charity Registration Number 11892 8993 RR0001

© 2022 Plan International Canada Inc. The Plan International Canada, Because I am a Girl names, associated trademarks and logos are trademarks of Plan International Canada Inc.

*The Standards Program Trustmark is a mark of Imagine Canada used under licence by Plan International Canada.