

Capacity Building in Social and Behavior Change Communication

*Focus on People, Focus on Organization,
Focus on Collaboration*

Communicate for Health used mutually reinforcing strategies to build the **technical SBCC** and **organizational capacity** of the Health Promotion Department (HPD) in the Ghana Health Service. These strategies were all based on principles of *learning by doing* and *learning by leading*.

The project supported several levels of the HPD (national, regional, and district) and the full range of skills essential for carrying out effective, large-scale SBCC campaigns. Strengthening the department itself—both the resources and the managerial skills of the HPD so they could coordinate effectively with other GHS departments/divisions and with external groups and donor-funded projects—was also a long-term USAID commitment.

Meeting these dual goals laid the foundation for the “department” to be raised to the status of a full “division” in April of 2019.

This historic move reflected not only the growing competence of health promotion professionals in the country, but the Government of Ghana’s recognition that the science of social and behavior change plays a critical role in saving lives.

COLLABORATION AND CO-LOCATION

The project co-located with the HPD at the national level to support technical staff as effectively as possible and ensure ownership of activities. They worked as a blended team to conceive and carry out multiple SBCC and health promotion campaigns. Communicate for Health staff supported, coached, and problem-solved with their HPD counterparts, enabling them to take the lead in planning, implementing, and monitoring SBCC project activities.

BEST PRACTICES IN CAPACITY BUILDING

Co-location of program technical staff with colleagues allowed HPD staff to lead and fully own program achievements.

Four capacity building components provided focus on both technical and practical skills at national, regional, and district levels.

A six-month intermittent program for new district health promotion officers empowered staff at this critical level.

The Change Challenge Fund provided grants that allowed trained staff to design programs focused on local area needs and appropriate communication channels.

TECHNICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

To analyze needs and establish a baseline, Communicate for Health worked with the HPD using standardized tools to assess SBCC technical and organizational capacity, skills, competencies, and work quality. To gain an understanding of issues at the district level, the project conducted a focus group with Technical Officers in Health Promotion (TOHPz) from four regions to explore capacity needs and job challenges. Results, along with insights from a bottleneck analysis undertaken by HPD in 2014, informed a formal Capacity Building Plan and provided a baseline for measuring change.

The project also supported the GHS Human Resources Division and HPD in reviewing the qualifications and competencies for health promotion officers and developed job descriptions. This ensured HPD staff at all levels would be hired and evaluated against a common set of performance standards.

Three major capacity building offerings were offered to different levels of the HPD and through competitive application processes ensuring the most motivated staff participated.

CHANGE AGENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The CAPD was a one-week intensive program designed for national- and regional-level trainees and included SBCC theory, formative assessment, how to work effectively with the media, community and social mobilization, working with community radio, use of mobile technology, and leadership and personal development skills. Training emphasized participatory approaches and integrating health priorities in SBCC campaigns.

Seventy Health Promotion Officers and TOHPz benefitted from the three waves of CAPD trainings. Each cohort achieved measurable improvements in five key SBCC competencies, with overall improvement ranging from 10 to 40 percent proficiency.

SET FOR CHANGE

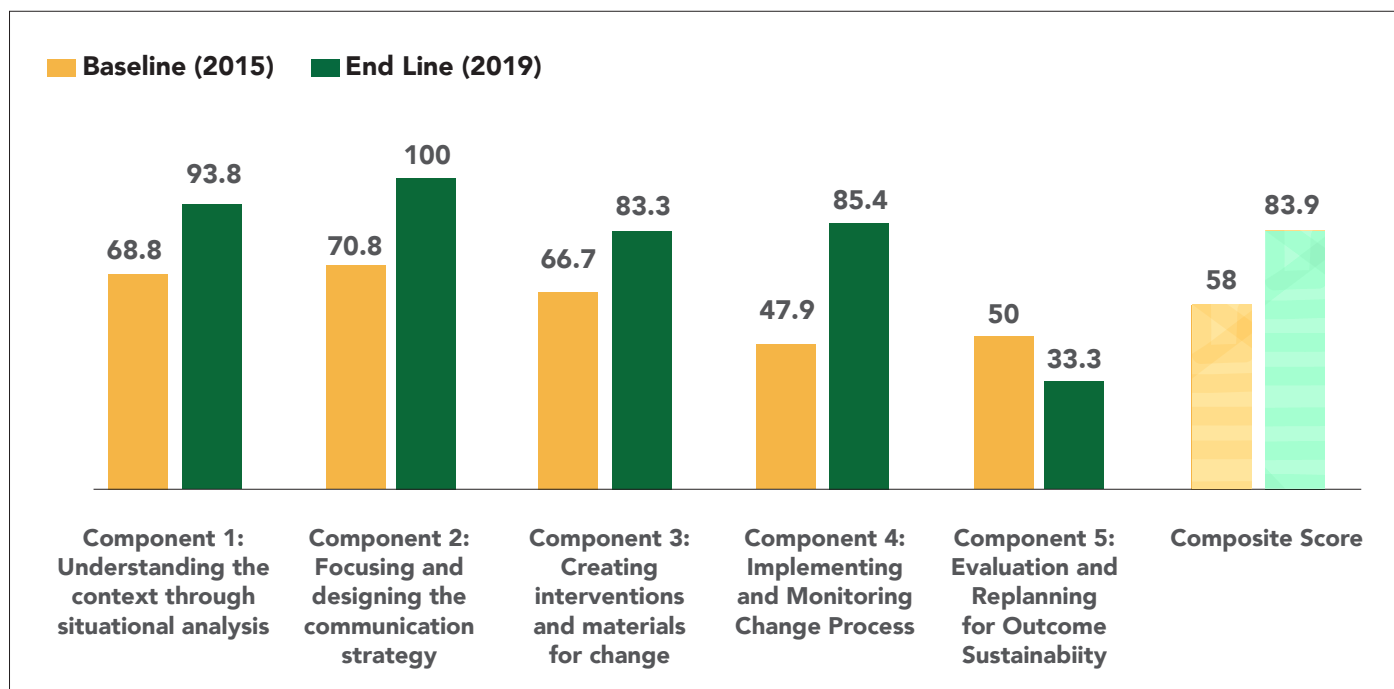
The project's second major capacity building program was designed for district TOHPz

who had graduated from the Kintampo College of Health and Wellbeing. As a relatively new cadre of health promotion professional, this group has faced special challenges. The Set for Change (SfC) Action Learning program was designed not only to improve their SBCC skills, but to help them identify and gain confidence in addressing some of the district-level organizational and professional obstacles they shared.

The SfC program consisted of four two-day sessions spread over six months. An important element of the program was the requirement that each participant identify a personal workplace situation or problem he or she would like to address, develop an action

The Set for Change (SfC) program helped TOHPz gain confidence in addressing some of the district-level organizational and professional obstacles they shared.

CHANGE IN HPD PROFICIENCY IN SBCC (PERCENT MASTERY OF FIVE COMPONENTS), 2015 AND 2019*



*As measured by performance in the SBCC-CAT (developed by the C-CHANGE Project)

plan with input from the group, carry this out over a period of time, and report back on progress. The project supported three cohorts, reaching a total of 27 participants.

CHANGE CHALLENGE FUND

The Change Challenge Fund (CCF) was a grant program to allow successful applicants from among the 97 CADP and SfC graduates to carry out innovative small-scale SBCC activities of their own design at the regional or district level, aligned with the overarching GoodLife strategy.

CCF applicants prepared proposals and budgets, as they would if applying for other kinds of external funding. The fund was managed through a Fixed Amount Award with GHS/HPD. Fifteen grants were awarded, with nine of the activities conducted in USAID priority regions. An important part of the scheme was the role of Regional Health Promotion Officers, who made supervisory visits of field implementation.

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Communicate for Health also worked with its partners to arrange on-location internships in higher-level SBCC technical skills for selected HPD staff members. The creative agency Mullen Lower offered a three-month internship program in materials development so that HPD staff could be directly engaged in the creation of the refreshed GoodLife, Live it Well brand. Viamo [formerly VOTO Mobile] provided HPD staff with skills in cutting edge SMS mobile technology and they were actively involved in the rollout of the project's interactive voice response (IVR) survey in 2017. Several HPD staff benefitted from a three-week internship with Creative Storm Networks on social media.



Dr. George Amofah interacting with the third CADP cohort at the refurbished HPD Auditorium in Korle Bu

EVALUATION

Together, these efforts helped raise the technical and organizational competence of the HPD. In Year 5 of the project, an end line SBCC capacity assessment of HPD included both testing of SBCC skills competencies and in-depth interviews with staff of the HPD, project partners, and key collaborating organizations.

The quantitative assessment showed SBCC competencies increased across five major skill areas from 58% in 2015 to 83.9% in 2019 (see figure).

But more importantly, staff of the HPD at all levels had gained both confidence in their abilities as a team to lead high-quality integrated health campaigns, as well as heightened credibility as a full-fledged Division among GHS colleagues and partner organizations.

Over five years, SBCC competencies in the HPD increased across five major skill areas from 58% proficiency to 83.9%.