

The Talking Book: Impacts of Audio Information for Women on Farming Practices, Gender Equity, and Nutrition in Northern Ghana

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This evaluation directly pertains to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2: to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” as well as one of the indicators of this goal to “...double the agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women” by 2030. In order to increase outputs of soybeans and groundnuts, the CARE Pathways program has piloted the Talking Book audio technology in seven communities of Ghana’s Upper East region. The Talking Book makes use of songs, dramas, and radio shows in local languages to disseminate extension information regarding gender, agriculture, marketing, and nutrition messages. The audio nature of the technology allows for education on nutrition and dissemination of farming techniques and practices to women no matter their level of literacy. Additionally, the piloting of the technology has taken place within pre-existing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), established to enhance women’s ability to share and incorporate the information received into their daily lives through conversation with others.

During the summer of 2016 an evaluation will be conducted by the CARE Pathways Ghana team and a student intern from Emory University’s Master’s in Development Practice program. The evaluation will measure the impact of this technology through field assessments including focus groups, surveys, interviews, and observation to determine the knowledge gained and the application of the farming practices promoted by the Talking Book. The evaluation will conclude with data analysis and recommendations on how the CARE Pathways program can most effectively use the Talking Book technology.

The evaluation will determine the usefulness and practicality of audio technologies for education and training for rural women on agriculture, food security, and nutrition information. It will also seek to discern best practices for implementing this technology and potential for bringing it to scale elsewhere. The outcomes of the evaluation have the potential to contribute to existing strategies for creating food security and improving nutrition for women and farmers in other locations around the world.