

WASSA EAST DISTRICT HEALTH SERVICES
2020 REPORT - NUTRITION UNIT
BY
STEPHEN ARMACHIE (Dist. Nutrition Officer)

INTRODUCTION

- The nutrition unit promotes nutrition in the District. The unit is responsible for implementing nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific interventions and tackles micro and macro nutrition issues in the District. The unit also collaborates with the Assembly's decentralized departments such as Dept. of Agric, Community Dev't & Social Welfare etc. to carry out its activities.
- The unit is able to achieve this through 96 static child welfare clinic (CWC) and outreach points strategically positioned around the District.

CHALLENGES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

- Low coverage of Vit. A supplementation for children 6-59 months.
- Lack of funding for monitoring and supervisory visits.
- Frequent shortage of ready to use therapeutic foods (RUFT) and other supplements.
- Lack of length boards in some of the health facilities.
- Shortage of Vit A capsules in the District.
- Lack of co-operation and supports from parents, adolescents and other stakeholders on Girls Iron and Folic Tablets Supplementation (GIFTS) program.
- Implementation of GIFT in schools also suffered due to the impact of Covid-19.

PRIORITIES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

- Increase vitamin A supplementation to children 6-59 months using multiple strategies.
- Sensitize pregnant women and school children on anemia prevention strategies
- Lobby Regional Health Management Team for regular supply of Vit A capsules, length boards and combined maternal and child health records book (MCHRB).
- Increase coverage for GIFTS programme, for both in-school and out-of-school adolescents.
- Intensity education on the importance of the GIFTS program.
- Intensity sensitization on breastfeeding at all levels.

INTERVENTION UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD

Growth monitoring and promotion

These sessions were performed on a monthly basis in all the 71 outreach points and 25 static points in the District.

Weights of children were taken and compared to their ages and to determine their nutritional status either as normal, moderate-underweight or severe-underweight.

Heights of children is also recorded every three months and compared with their ages to determine their growth as normal, moderate-stunting or severe-stunting.

THREE YEAR TREND PERFORMANCE OF THE DISTRICT AT CWC

Underweight Recorded by CWC Attendance

YEARS	SEVERE UNDERWEIGHT	MODERATE	TOTAL UNDERWEIGHT
2019	0.08	0.49	0.57
2020	0.00	0.38	0.38
2021	0.00	0.73	0.73

Stunted Growth Recorded

YEARS	SEVERE STUNTING	MODERATE-STUNTING	TOTAL STUNTING
2019	0.00	0.12	0.12
2020	0.00	0.56	0.56
2021	0.00	0.00	0.00

Initiation of Exclusive Breastfeeding (BF) at 3 Months

Years	# of Children Breastfed	Coverage
2019	613	87%
2020	524	80%
2021	645	85%

Continuous Breastfeeding at 1 Year

Years	# of Children Breastfed	Coverage
2019	888	96%
2020	979	99%
2021	972	98%

Timing in initiation of complementary feeding at 6 months

Years	Children initiated at 6 months	Children still on exclusive BF at 6 months	Coverage
2019	112	484	18%
2020	195	620	23%
2021	563	157	78%

Vitamin A Supplementation

Years	% coverage 6-11 months	% coverage 12-59	Total coverage
2019	129.1	66.5	73.5
2020	106.3	34.6	42.6
2021	66.6	18.9	24.1

Interventions in pregnancy, IFA uptake and PNC

Years	IFA 3 (times)	IFA 6 (times)	Postnatal IFA
2019	1247	603	981
2020	986	525	974
2021	1237	649	1307

Trends of Anemia in pregnancy a registration

Years	Hb checked at registration	No. Anemic at registration (Hb <11g/dl, Hb<7g/dl)	% Anemic
2019	1329	380	28.6
2020	1337	415	31.0
2021	1513	331	21.9

Anemia at 36 Weeks

Years	Hb checked at 36 weeks	No. Anemic at 36 weeks (Hb < 11g/dl and Hb< 7g/dl)	% Anemic at 36 weeks gestation
2019	813	230	28.3
2020	779	227	29.1
2021	867	234	26.9

Girls Iron and Folic Tablets Supplementation (GIFTS) Program

Anemia prevalence has been persistently high in Ghana among women of child bearing age and children.

According to GDHS 2014, 42 percent of women and 66 percent of children below five years are affected with anaemia.

The Girls Iron and Folic Tablets Supplementation (GIFTS) program is designed to provide weekly iron and folic acid (IFA) supplements through school health services and others channels.

The table shows the District performance on GIFT from Jan-June, 2021 for out-of-schools adolescents.

Indicators	Achievement
No. of new clients enrolled	795
Total adolescents registered (new+old)	15728
Number give IFA	5507
No. anemic	0



Adolescents meeting organized by Ektuase Community Clinic to educate and supply them with the IFA tablets as part of the GIFTS program and other health related services

The Nutrition-friendly school initiative (NFSI)

The Nutrition-friendly school initiative (NFSI) is a school-based health and nutrition program is being adopted at the platform on which to implement a set of school based health and nutrition activities aimed at improving the school environment to make it more nutrition sensitive.

The rationale for focusing on school –aged nutrition, childhood and adolescence are known to be critical periods for health and development as the physiological need for nutrients increases and the consumption of a diet of high nutritional quality is particularly important.

Evidence shows that good nutrition enhances academic performance and contributes to lifelong health and well-being, and that ill health can be a catalyst for absenteeism or dropping out of school.

The Nutrition-friendly schools initiative (NFSI) is a school based-health and nutrition program to address the double-burden of malnutrition. The objectives are to provide a framework to address the double burden of nutrition-related ill-health and to serve as a mechanism to interconnect all school-based health and also improving the school environment to make it more nutrition sensitive.

In view of these, six (6) schools in the Wassa East District has been enrolled into the program currently. The schools include: S.I.P.L D/A School, Daboase D/A, Krofofrom D/A School, Nsadieso D/A School, New Subri D/A School, Akyempim D/A School.

Below points are some of the minimum packages for the Nutrition-Friendly Schools.

➤ Fruits and vegetable Day.

This is a day set aside within the week to give the students fruits and vegetables in other to improve their immune system. Other activities under the minimum package includes:

- **Physical Activity Day**
- **General Cleaning/Sanitation Day**
- **Nutrition Education Day**



Pictures showing fruits and vegetables at Daboase D/A School on Fruits/Vegetable Day

The Smart School Programme

The smart school is an approach that engages young school children who are considered intelligent, active and smart enough to be equipped with knowledge and skills in educating their peers. Parents and the community as a whole on recommended infants and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, including their own nutrition. They also serve as agent of change in identifying good and poor feeding practices in their families/communities to adopt healthy dieting and other appropriate nutrition/health-related behaviors.

As at now, no school has formed the ‘Smart School Club’ but efforts is being made to introduce the programme in our schools.