

COMMUNITY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT: GHANA

Prepared by the Rapid Results Institute, January 2007

Ten RRI teams in Ghana proved they could achieve what had been considered nearly impossible only 100 days earlier— in record time and at a lower cost. For example, in one-hundred days one RRI Team not only constructed a 3-classroom block with office and store at only half of the cost of identical infrastructure projects in their district. They also lowered pupil absenteeism from 49% to 16% of students.



The RRI Process is a tool for implementation. It has shown us that it's possible to achieve big results in a short period of time when working as a team.

—Traditional Chief and RRI Team Member

RRI project goals are defined in terms of results. The goal is not a school building, but what the school building should do (such as reduce pupil absenteeism or increase enrollment).

—CBRDP National Director

Believing in the possibility of this type of high performance was initially perhaps the single most difficult challenge to overcome.

When we first heard 100 days, it sounded funny. I thought this can't work. But they explained that it was done in other countries, so I thought why not in Ghana?

—Assin South's District Chief Executive



It was by no means easy – many problems were encountered along the way.

We encountered many problems, volunteers were late, kids weren't motivated to go to school, and money was sometimes not released to us [the RRI team] on time. Working on the RRI taught us unity- that unity means not giving up. We set an attendance law so volunteers would come on time, we worked with an NGO to mobilize books, and we worked with the traditional authorities to loan money while we waited for our funds.

—RRI Team Member

It was difficult, and people would lose hope when the funds weren't flowing, and when technical problems came up. We had to keep encouraging [the communities], so as not to lose the 100 days. At the end of the day, the District Assembly and the communities had to solve these problems.

—Assin South's District Chief Executive

RRI teams explained their experience was about learning while doing, and about increasing their confidence. They have proven that they can be successful when given responsibility for their communities' development.



The RRI is learning by doing. We completed our project in 100 days. The RRI builds our confidence.

—Community member summarizing his 100-day experience as a RRI Team Member

We want to appeal to the District Assembly to give us more projects. We will use the RRI to do our electrification.

DDI Team Member

Apart from the results, this experience reinforced many practices and shattered many misperceptions that RRI Teams say will help them achieve other community development goals.

...we could divide the work among ourselves, and do more in a shorter time, but at the end of the day there was harmonization.

—RRI Team Member

My RRI developed daily accountability and transparency. We kept weekly records of finances. On Saturdays we would have a Gon Gon meeting with the whole community and shared weekly finances with everyone. This gave the community trust, and they contributed materials, which they hadn't done before the RRI.

—RRI Team Leader

The perception is always that leaders of a project are taking money. We helped to break this perception in the community and explained it [the RRI] was about volunteering.

—Assin South's District Chief Executive



And with trust, communities were willing to volunteer

And even the [traditional] chief himself was mixing mortar!

—RRI Team Member

The experience modeled effective partnership between communities and their district assemblies

The lessons learned are that if you involve the community and explain their role, the process will be transparent and the community can do things themselves. This urges other communities to do the same thing and take ownership and to protect the building.

—Assin South's District Chief Executive

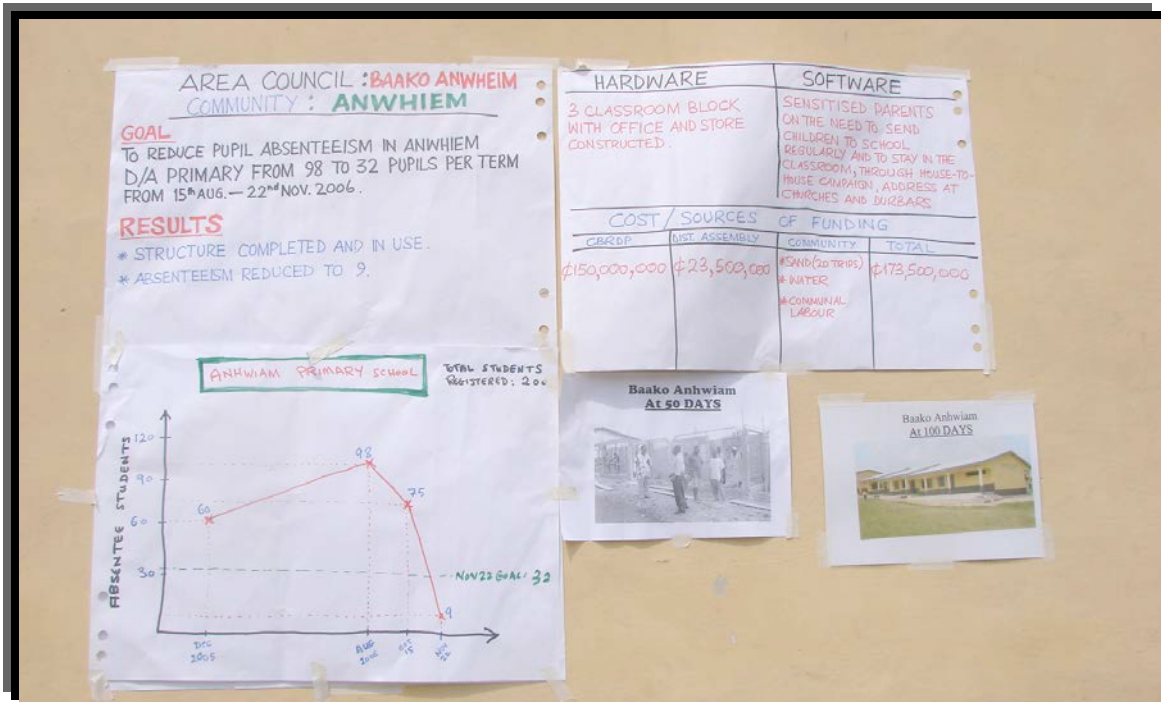
This project [RRI] contradicts the idea that communities don't have capacity themselves.

Director of Ghana's Community Based Rural Development Program

Local government leaders expressed the utility of the RRI experience on overall development of their district, listing numerous development priorities that they believe will benefit from employing this approach— including child feeding programs, rural electrification and clean water.

This approach is very good. The community has accepted it and they ask for more resources to be given. This will ease pressure from the District Assembly... we have been relieved a bit financially. If we had seen [RRIs] earlier, we would've gone far far.

—Assin South's District Chief Executive



Spiritual leaders always say, ‘everyday is a new opportunity’. The RRI program is our opportunity to change the way we do development. This is your [speaking to the community] opportunity to build a school cheaper and faster. This is your opportunity to build a clinic and housing for nurses. This is your opportunity to build latrines that a life in dignity demands.

We are convinced the money has been used properly. I have listened to the people here and we are building community through participation and that’s why we are getting it right.

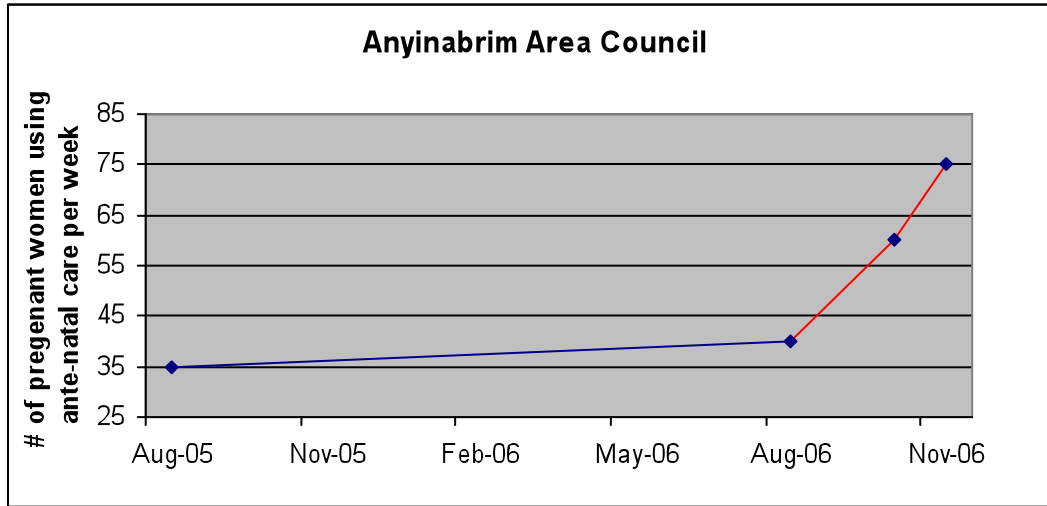
There have been so many efforts and the world still isn’t fixed, why is that? We start and don’t finish. What is the point of having a cart with three wheels? We need to work together.

—Mats Karlsson. World Bank Country Director. Ghana

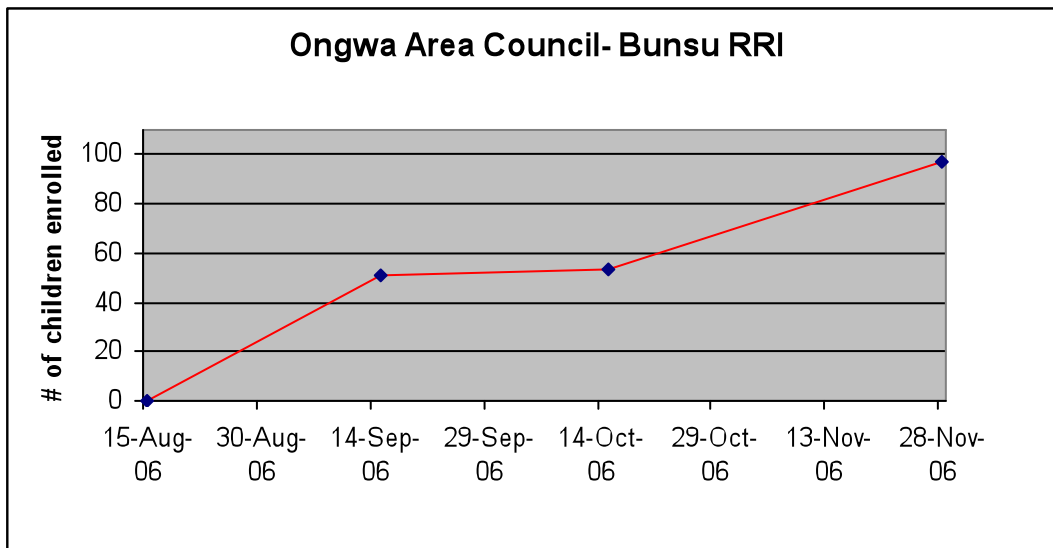
BACKGROUND

On August 8-9, 2006, ten pilot Rapid Results Initiatives (RRI) Teams corresponding to eight Area Councils were launched by the Community Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP), with support from the Rapid Results Institute and Robert H. Schaffer & Associates (RHS&A). The ten pilot RRIs spanned two districts in Ghana’s Eastern region and two districts in its Central region.

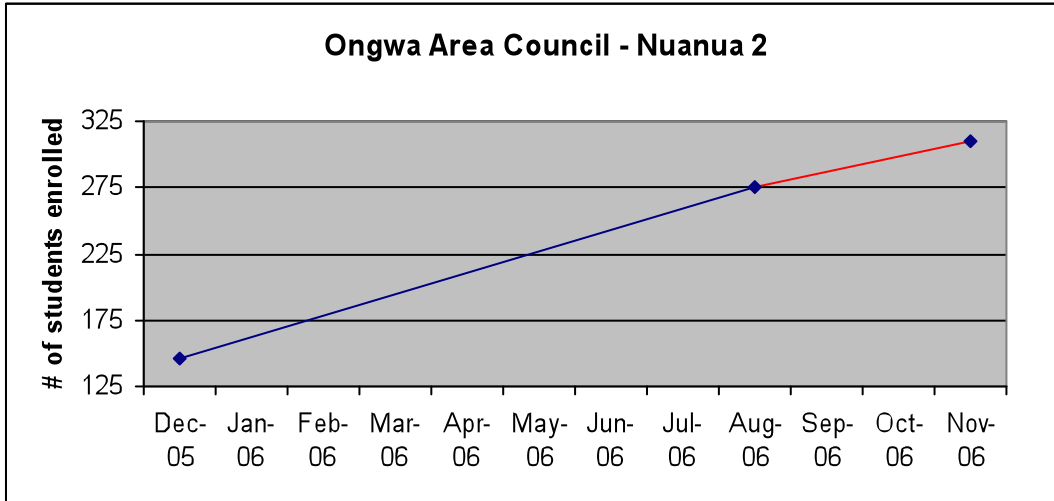
RESULTS ACHIEVED



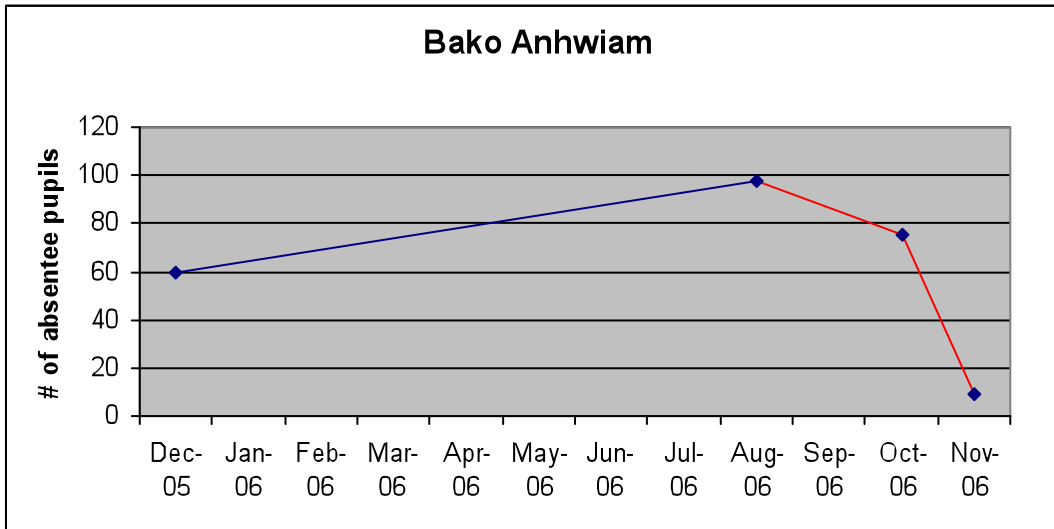
4-Unit Nurses Quarters built in 100 days.



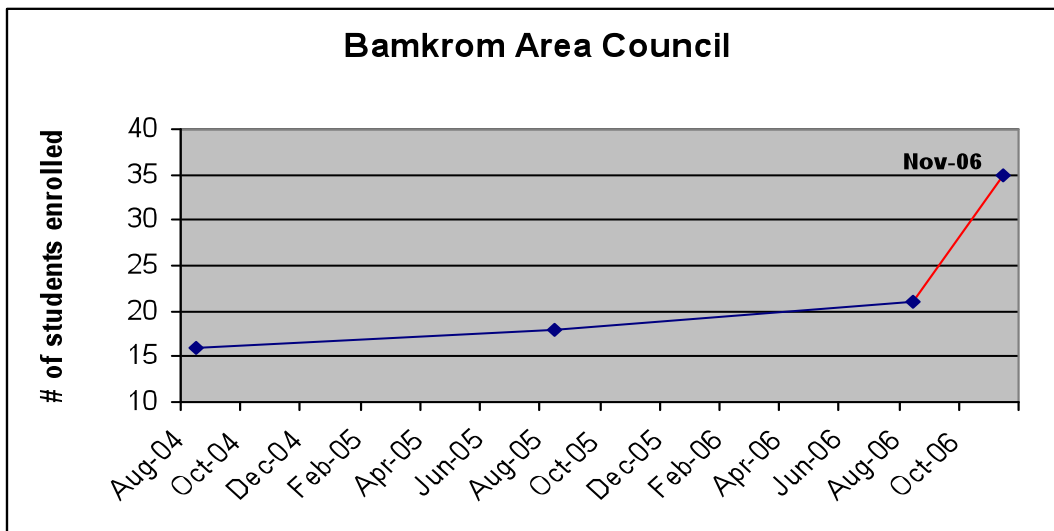
2-Unit classroom block, office and store built in 100 days.



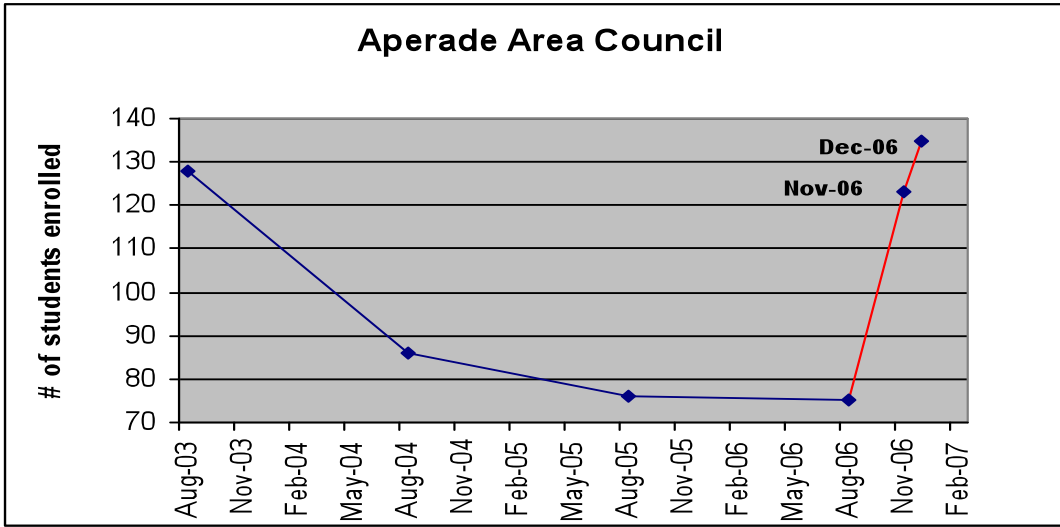
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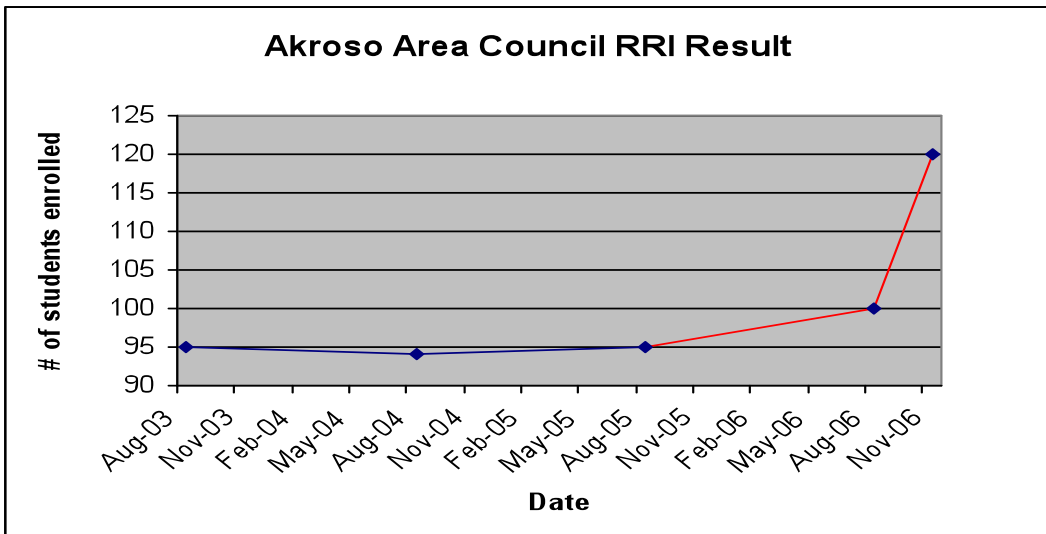
3-unit classroom block with office and store built in 100 days.



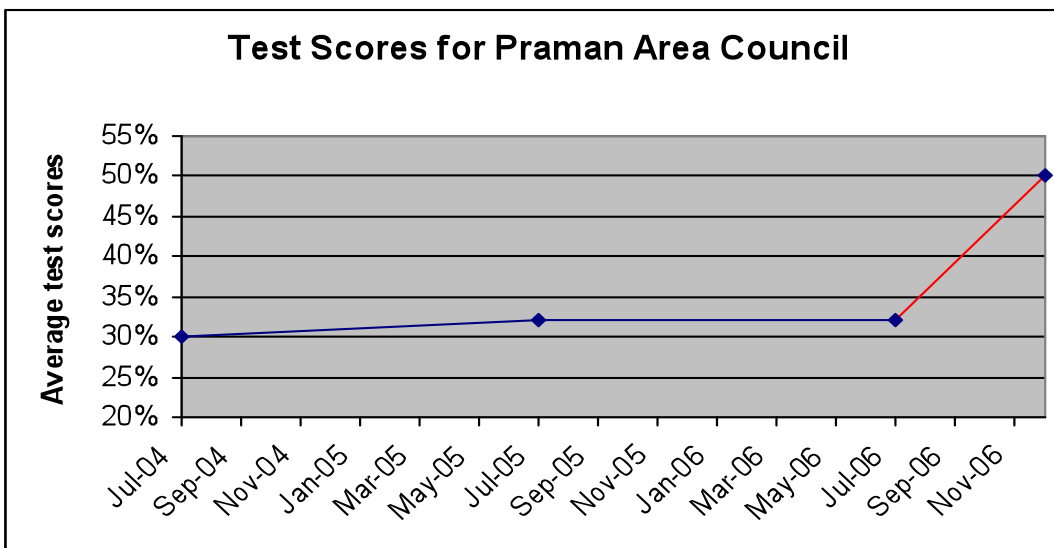
3-Classroom block with office and store built in 100 days.



3-Classroom block with office and store built in 100 days.



3-unit classroom block with office and store built in 100 days.



3-unit classroom block with office and store built in 100 days.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

“This hasn’t happened in this country before, usually it takes 6 months but they built these classrooms in 95 days”

—Asikuma Odoben Brakwa’s District Chief Executive

(referring to one RRI Team’s completion of a 3-unit classroom block with office and store in 95 days. Noteworthy is a separate 3-unit classroom block three feet away, whose construction began four years ago and has not been completed to date).

In addition to setting a record in timely completion, the RRI projects set new records in cost-efficiency. For example, with the RRI, the 3-unit school block with store and office cost 173 million cedis (approximately USD 18,740). Usually a 3-unit school block costs 300 million cedis (approximately USD 32,500).ⁱ

Rapid Results tools- designed to foster accountability and transparency- were adapted by each RRI team to fit their context. Outcomes included unprecedented community volunteer community labor, as well as in-kind community contributions that helped to lower cost. Teams translated RRI implementation principles into a myriad of monitoring mechanisms. Many RRI Teams had a community member checking in daily with the construction workers to monitor progress, quality, and proper use of resources. As one RRI team members summed it up “tight supervision = no cheating”.

Other factors lowering costs stem from the devolution of funds to Area Councils instead of the conventional large contractor. RRI teams negotiated lower salaries with local artisans, appealing to the fact that they too would benefit from this development in the community. Working with local artisans instead of an outside contractor is also cited as a reason for high quality results. “Because their children will also be attending the school, the artisans [construction workers] insisted in the highest quality standard.”

The ownership expressed by RRI teams was also reflected in the lengths to which RRI teams went “the extra mile.” In a literal illustration of this metaphor, the Ongwa Area Council RRI teams (Bunsu RRI and Nuanua II -- among the more rural and inaccessible areas), explained how during the rainy season team members carried 200 bags of cement for ½ kilometer to the construction site, since the truck transporting the materials could not continue on the road. When asked why they did this, they responded “...we had to keep the 100 days...!”

The Rapid Results Approach is designed to bridge the gap between political or technical leadership and front-line implementers.



RRI teams explained their results, and were congratulated by the World Bank Country Director, the Deputy Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, and other visiting dignitaries.

“Flash in the Pan” – or the Beginning of Sustained and Scalable Performance Improvement?

CBRDP leadership has made it clear that they are after sustainability and scalability, not pilots that become show cases for donors in an otherwise “business as usual” operation. This is just the start though, and only time will tell whether this aspiration will become a reality. Several of the conditions for sustainability and scalability are in place:

1. The case for performance and achievement has been made...

The demonstration teams have a powerful and empowering story to tell, and real results and a significant up tick in performance levels to back their stories. So the “social proof” – that this can be done in our context – has been established. Moreover, it is clear that the level of performance expectations, at least among the demo teams and communities, has been lifted significantly. This confidence and optimism can be infectious, if properly leveraged.

2. There is a simple process that interested communities can replicate

The process that these teams went through to achieve their results is simple and replicable. The most subtle and sophisticated aspect of it is the stakeholder alignment before the launch of the teams, and the actual team launch workshops, where the teams set their 100-day Results commitments and develop their work plans. To help current and future teams through this process, the Rapid Results Institute trained CBRDP resources in all Regions to play the role of Rapid Results coaches, and accompanied the local coaches in the demo regions through the critical pre-launch and launch steps.

- 3. There is a human support infrastructure in place: local rapid results coaches**
The capacity transfer (in terms of supporting the Rapid Results Process) has started through the training and accompaniment of local RRI coaches in the demo Regions. These coaches do not represent an incremental cost. They are redeployed resources (from supervision to implementation support). The only additional costs are (a) continued skill development on supporting Rapid Results teams, and (b) local managerial costs (minimal charges for reimbursing people for travel to progress review meetings, etc.) So the initial capacity transfer from the Rapid Results Institute to local Rapid Results coaches has taken place, and these local coaches will be evaluated in part on their ability to transfer their capacity to local leaders and teams at the community level.
- 4. The political context is favorable – there is likely to be increasing demand for achievement and results, from central and local leaders**
Through careful planning and orchestration by the Director of CBRDP, Mr. Oppong and his team, there is already a buzz around this work at regional and central leadership levels (among individuals driving the decentralization agenda).
- ◆ The Chief Executives of the pilot districts made it clear, after they heard the account of the teams, that they are ready and willing to devolve the development projects to the communities, provided these continue to deliver these kinds of results.
 - ◆ The Deputy Minister of Decentralization participated in the wrap-up workshops at the two Regions, and pledged to demand that all other Regions and Districts adopt the Rapid Results Approach in their community development efforts.

The above factors set the stage for sustainability and scalability. It is now up to the leadership group at the national, district and community levels to leverage these factors and to turn this initial experience into a sustained and country-wide movement for local empowerment, achievement, and results.

ⁱ Cost figures were verified by the World Bank Ghana country office, December 2006.

Acknowledgements

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For complete video documentation of presentations cited here, please contact info@rapidresults.org