Share Learn Share

BasicNeeds-Ghana Newsletter

Issue 10

October, 2018



BasicNeeds Holds Inter-Ministerial Forum on Sustainable Mental Health Financing ... 5

UK Minister of State visits SHG in Accra ... 6

SHGs hold interface Meetings with District Assemblies in Upper East Region ... 7

NYU Students, Faculty Visit BasicNeeds-Ghana ... 9

BasicNeeds-Ghana Participates in 2018 Edition of Global Disability Summit ... 10

UNDP Adaptation Fund Project Takes off in Savelugu ... 11

Staff of BasicNeeds, Partners Undergo Training in Safeguarding ... 12



Editorial

"Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World"

ctober 10, 2018 was World Mental Health Day. It is a day set aside by the United Nations Organisation and led by the World Health Organisation to acknowledge efforts in improving global mental health, by increasing awareness and enhancing practices and services. The 2018 World Mental Health Day was marked under the theme: "Young people and mental health in a changing world."

Young people make up a significant proportion of the population of Ghana. They live in a time of great change. Their world is marked by rapid changes in various facets of life. These changes, inevitable as they are, potentially represent a source of distress to their mental well-being. Traditional bedrocks that provided stability for many young people in times past – strong family and community bonds that gave them identity and enduring formation into adulthood - are now, unfortunately, eroding at a faster pace than ever before. The pressure to succeed socio-economically and the related challenges to get formal education and jobs, vulnerabilities emanating from child labour, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, inadequacies in parental care and exposure to drugs and hard substances, among others, constitute the apparent and real challenges young people grapple with. Pervasive and unregulated use of Internet technologies such as violent online games and interactive social media, also expose many young people to new forms of threats like cyber bullying, sleep deprivation, eating disorders and romance scam, among others.

Despite this, huge opportunities exist for the growth and development of young people to enable them tap into their energies and potentials in productive ways. It is for this reason that everything must be done to prevent mental illness, promote mental health and provide treatment and rehabilitation for young people, especially those in most need of mental health care services. It is for this reason that BasicNeeds-Ghana and Mental Health of Society (MEHSOG) join the rest of the world to celebrate this year's World Mental Health Day.

In this regard, BasicNeeds-Ghana and partners

continue to implement projects and programmes tailored to specific population groups, such as young people and women of the reproductive age. With the support of UK aid, BasicNeeds-Ghana and its partners have implemented community youth and school-based mental health initiatives to increase awareness and promote peer-support as well as provision of medical treatment, including counselling services for young people.

Over 7000 young people, from 95 schools in 19 districts have been reached by our projects. The Ghana Alliance for Mental Health and Development, made up of over 128 civil society organisations and individuals, continue to widely sensitise the public and advocate for improvement in mental health services and policies in Ghana. With support of STAR-Ghana and UNDP, BasicNeeds-Ghana and its implementation partners continue to bring to the fore the need for inclusive policies and programmes that address mental health needs of the poor and vulnerable, especially young people and women.

The health and wellbeing of young people should be of concern to all. They are the future of any society and everything should be done to safeguard them and their future. Therefore, government, civil society entities and the Ghanaian populace must support efforts that promote the mental well-being of young people, their families and communities by joining forces to adequately resource the mental health system in Ghana.

We entreat the Ministry of Health and its related agencies, particularly the Ghana Health Service and the Mental Health Authority of Ghana, to develop specialist services that suitably addresses mental health issues of young people mental in the communities and across the health care system of the country.

Psycho-social support and counselling services also need to be deepened, especially in the country's educational institutions. Finally, efforts need to be mobilised to completely de-stigmatise mental health issues. This will encourage young people, and indeed anyone in need of mental health care to freely access it.

Maternal Mental Health Project Relaunched

roject officers from BasicNeeds-Ghana, Gub Katimali Society (GKS), MIHOSO International Foundation and Centre for People's Empowerment and Rights Initiatives (CPRI) participated in a workshop in Sunyani from June 27 to 29, 2018 as part of activities to relaunch the Maternal Mental Health project titled "Enhancing Maternal Mental Health of pregnant women, mothers and their children to realise maternal and child health in Ghana" which is funded by UK aid. The relaunch became necessary when the project was redesigned to include activities to improve safe birth and breastfeeding of project beneficiaries. The 3-day workshop was meant to discuss the redesigned project and validate project activities and outcomes that would enable the partners meet set targets.

The Maternal Mental Health Project is an initiative of BasicNeeds-Ghana, in collaboration with BasicNeeds UK. The project seeks to contribute to improved maternal health and livelihood outcomes among poor and vulnerable women and girls in target districts in Ghana, specifically in the Upper West Region, Upper East Region, Northern Region, Brong-Ahafo Region and Greater Accra Region through enhancing the quality of and access to maternal mental health

services, in combination with behaviour change communication and income generation strategies.

As part of the project, vulnerable women will be encouraged to access services from the community based Maternal and child Health (MCH) services. Through the community Self-Help Groups (SHG) in place or others that will emerge from this project, vulnerable pregnant women and new mothers will be mobilised to benefit from specialist outreach treatment services and routine services. The extensive public awareness that will be created, through deployment of posters, erection of billboards and distribution of handbooks, is also meant to encourage families to support their relations that are mentally ill to come forward for peri-natal services.

The project will actively involve selected health care service providers, particularly mid-wives, general nurses and community health nurses to improve psycho-social support to pregnant women, new mothers and their babies with common and severe mental health disorders. Traditional birth attendants will also be trained to spot signs of mental distress among their patrons and refer them to trained health professionals for care.



Project officers from BasicNeeds, MIHOSO, GKS and CPRI participated in the workshop

BasicNeeds-Ghana, Researchers Collaborate on SMART-Africa Study

asicNeeds-Ghana and reseachers from the University of Ghana School of Public Health and Washington University's Brown School of Medicine are undertaking a study focused on children with disruptive behaviour and their families titled "Strengthening Mental Health and Research Training in Africa (SMART-Africa)".

The study, which is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) of the United States of America, is being conducted Dr Ozge Sensoy (arrowed) taking SHEP Coordinators through in the United States of America, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya and Ghana. The principal investigators for the study are Dr Mary MacKay, Dean of the Brown School of Medicine of Washington University and Dr Fred M. Ssewamala, Professor of Medicine at same institution and Founder Director of the International Center for Child Health and Development (ICHAD) at Washington University. In Ghana, the study is led by Dr Emmanuel Asampong and Dr Ibrahim Abdallah.

The main objective of the study, which is longitudinal in nature, is to examine the influence exercised by state and non-state actors, families, communities and schools on the uptake, implementation, effectiveness and sustainability of evidence-based practices that address serious disruptive behaviours among children.

In Ghana, the project is targetting 180 school children between the ages of eight (8) to thirteen (13)



Dang Malgu

years as well as their care-givers to develop specific interventions aimed at addressing issues of disruptive behaviours that affect children. The study involves School Health Education Programme Coordinators (SHEP), selected children and their parents working together

So far, SHEP coordinators have been trained on the locally adapted version of the Multi-Family Group Therapy titled "Dang Malgu" - Family Togetherness which is the main mode of intervention in this study. Project officers and data collectors have also been trained in NIMH's course on Human Subject Research and received due certification and accreditation. They have also been trained in research metholodology and ethics. These trainings were meant to equip the BasicNeeds-Ghana project team with the requisite skills and knowledege to conduct the research within ethically valid and acceptable boundaries.



BasicNeeds-Ghana Staff together with facilitators after a workshop on Research Involving Human Subjects

BasicNeeds Holds Inter-Ministerial Forum on Sustainable Mental Health Financing

BasicNeeds-Ghana, on April 6, 2018, organised a forum to discuss sustainable ways of financing community mental health. The forum was organised as part of a STAR-Ghana funded project titled "Accessible and Quality Mental Health Care for Poor and Marginalised Persons with Mental Disorders."

Ministries and agencies represented at the meeting were the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Mental Health Authority of Ghana (MHAG). Other organisations in attendance were the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG) and the Consortium of NGOs implementing the project – BasicNeeds-Ghana, Mental Health Society of Ghana (MEHSOG), MIHOSO International Foundation, Centre for People's Development and Rights Initiatives (CPRI) and NORSAAC.

Speaker after speaker at the forum reiterated the fact that mental health in Ghana lacked adequate funding. They were unanimous in their assertion that the mental health sub-sector was largely donor-funded, and as such, unsustainable.

During the plenary session, participants offered suggestions and strategies that could be employed to improve mental health financing, most importantly at the community level. Some participants also made commitments on behalf of their outfits to drive forward the agenda of sustainable mental health financing.

In a related development, BasicNeeds-Ghana held a media forum on May 30, 2018. This was meant to sustain advocacy efforts geared at influencing sustainable financing of mental health care in Ghana. The media practitioners invited were senior correspondents, programme producers and newscasters. Also, in attendance were hosts of popular talk-show programmes. During the forum, which came off at the Sundlodge Hotel, Tesano-Accra, participants helped to validate challenges that had been identified at the Inter-Ministerial forum and suggested ways by which media platforms could be used to increase public discourse on mental health financing.



Dr Emmanuel Odame, Ag. Director of Monitoring and Evaluation at the Ministry of Health read the sector minister's speech

UK Minister of State visits SHG in Accra

The United Kingdom's Minister of State for Africa, Mrs Harriet Baldwin MP, took time off of her busy schedule to visit a self-help group (SHG) of people with mental illness or epilepsy and their care-givers at the Nima- CDR Community Social Center during her working visit to Ghana on August 28, 2018. This peer support group and several others are among self-help groups supported by BasicNeeds-Ghana with funding from UK aid.

The Minister undertook the visit in the company of the British High Commissioner to Ghana, His Excellency Iain Walker, Country Director of DFID for Ghana and Liberia, Philip Smith, and Team leader for Social Sectors at DFID Ghana, Jemima Gordon-Duff. Also present was the Executive Director of BasicNeeds-Ghana, Peter Badimak Yaro. The Minister's

visit to Ghana is her first since her appointment to the office of Minister of State for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Minister of State at the Department for International Development on January 9, 2018.

Despite her scheduled engagements with several high profile personalities in the country including the President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo, the Minister of Trades and Industry, Hon. Alan Kwadwo Kyeremanteng and a visit to the Blue Skies factory, Mrs Harriet Baldwin made time to visit members of the Nima self-help group of people with mental illness or epilepsy and their caregivers. mental health During her interaction with the service users and their care-givers, she learnt about their experiences as people living with mental illness, the treatment options they had explored, and what benefits had accrued to them by their membership of the peer support group. The members unanimously agreed that their involvment in activities of the self-



leader for Social Sectors at DFID UK Minister of State, Harriet Baldwin (arrowed) interacting with Nima SHG Ghana, Jemima Gordon-Duff. members. Also present are (right to left) Peter Yaro (BNGh), Philip Smith Also present was the Executive (DFID Country Director), Jemima Gordon Duff (DFID Health Advisor) and Director of Pasic Noode Change UK High Commissioner to Ghana Iain Walker

help group had aided their recovery and enabled them to take control of their lives. They also said BasicNeeds-Ghana had supported them by building their capacity to advocate for themselves and fight against stigma and discrimination.

The Minister and her entourage also visited Zelia Osmanu, a mental health service user and a beneficiary, at her onion store located at the Nima Market. At the end of the visit, the Minister said she was touched by the stories from mental health service users and their care-givers. The UK High Commissioner to Ghana said "it is tremendous to see how those in the group have taken control of their lives with support from BasicNeeds". Executive Director of BasicNeeds-Ghana thanked the dignitaries and entreated them to convey to the Government and people of the United Kingdom the gratitude and appreciation of people with mental illness or epilepsy and their caregivers in Ghana who have immensely benefited from UK aid's investments in mental health development in Ghana.

SHGs hold interface Meetings with District Assemblies in Upper East Region

elf-Help Groups (SHG) in eight municipalities and districts of the Upper East Region have successfully held interface meetings with frontline staff of their respective municipal and district assemblies (MDA) to demand inclusion in government's ongoing social and pro-poor initiatives. The groups met with Coordinating Directors, Planning, Budget and Finance Officers, Heads of decentralised ministries and agencies Chairpersons of associations of persons with disability, Social Services Committee, Disability Fund Management Committee, and Presiding members of the various Assemblies in Bolgatanga and Kassena-Nankana Municipalities. Similar meetings were held at Bongo, Talensi, Bawku West, Binduri, Garu-Tempane and Builsa North Districts – all in the Upper East Region. The interface meetings were facilitated by BasicNeeds-Ghana with funding support from UK aid under a project titled "Supporting Government to Build a Community Mental Health System".

Interface meetings are platforms that bring mental health and epilepsy service users and duty bearers together to discuss issues that affect people with psychosocial needs. Duty bearers targetted during these meetings include Municipal and District Chief Executives, Coordinating Directors, Planning, Budget and Finance Officers of the assemblies. Others include heads of decentralised government ministries and agencies like the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Ghana Education Service (GES), National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), National Board of Small-Scale Industries (NBSSI) and the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development (DSW/CD). Chairpersons of Social Services Committee, Disability Fund Management Committee, and Presiding members of the various Assemblies as well as the chairs of district level offices of Ghana Federation of Disabled (GFD) are also invited.

Early on, BasicNeeds-Ghana organised a forum to sensitise District Planning and Budget Officers on the level of support people with mental illness or epilepsy deserve under law and how the gaps therein could be addressed in the Medium Term Development Plans



Programmes Manager of BasicNeeds-Ghana briefing frontline staff of the Bolga Municipal Assembly

(MTDP) of the various district assemblies as provided for in the guidelines of the National Development Planning Commission.

During the interface meeting, the local government officials were briefed on interventions undertaken by BasicNeeds-Ghana in their respective districts among which were the donation of motorbikes funded by UK aid and distribution of psychotropic medicines through BasicNeeds-Ghana's partnership with Direct Relief and Johnson and Johnson. Other activities mentioned were provision of skills training equipment to stabilised mental health and epilepsy service users, formation and strengthening of SHGs and building capacity of SHG to engage in advocacy. The officials informed the SHG members about available social interventions they could access in their districts. The SHG members used the occasion to request support from their district assemblies in order to fully utilise government's pro-poor interventions.

At the end of the interface meetings, officials of the various assemblies promised to support people with mental illness or epilepst to fully benefit from the 2% allocation of the District Assemblies' Common Fund (DACF) meant for people with disability. They also pledged to make sure that mental health activities receive prominence in the assemblies' MTDP. Representatives of the groups said they were satisfied with the assurances they had received from the officials. They, however, added that they would hold the assembly to account based on their commitments .

As a result of these interface meetings, five (5) districts in the Upper East Region have supported self-help groups in their jurisdiction to participate in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Mental Health Society of Ghana (MEHSoG) - the national association of self-



A member of the Bolgatanga SHG completing necessary documentation to benefit from the 2% DACF allocation to people with disabilities



A beneficairy of the 2% allocation to persons with disaility in Bolgatanga

help groups of people with mental illness and epilepsy in Ghana. The districts which supported the SHGs with varying amounts to participate in MEHSoG's AGM scheduled to take place in Kumasi are Kasenna Nankana Municipality, Bongo, Binduri, Bawku West and Talensi Districts.

Some district assemblies have also supported individual people with mental illness or epilepsy with cash grants to buy medication, undertake livelihood enhancing activities or return to school. The Bawku West District Assembly supported persons suffering from mental illness or epilepsy with an amount of GH¢ 3,000.00 to buy psychotropic and anti-epileptic medicine. The Assembly also supported the Ateltaaba SHG in the Kukore community with 30 bags of fertilizer to cultivate maize.

The Bongo District Assembly also supported seven

(7) service users with funds ranging from GHS 500.00 to GH¢ 1,700.00 whiles the Talensi District also supported users with amounts ranging from GH¢1,000.000 to GH\$1,900.00 to embark on various kinds of livelihood activities or pursue their educational carriers. Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly also supported 48 service users with funds ranging from GH¢400.00 to GH¢1,500.00 to embark on various livelihoods activities.

NYU Students, Faculty Visit BasicNeeds

Postgraduate students and faculty from the College of Global Public Health of the New York University (NYU) in the United States visited the offices of BasicNeeds-Ghana in Tamale on August 17, 2018, to familiarise themselves with the organisation's work and practices. The visit, which formed part of a "Semester Abroad" programme designed for postgraduate students of NYU's Global Mental Health programme, was led by Dr Emily Goldmann, Clinical Assistant Professor at the College of Global Public Health, New York University.

Executive Director of BasicNeeds-Ghana, Peter Badimak Yaro, in welcoming the visitors, said that he felt excited that many young people studying at the postgraduate level in a prestigious university such as NYU were interested in learning from the activities of BasicNeeds-Ghana. He expressed optimism that the visit would be a positive learning experience for them and an opportunity for BasicNeeds-Ghana to share its experience.

Dr Goldmann, in her opening remarks, said that following a presentation Peter Yaro had made about the work of BasicNeeds-Ghana to NYU students in 2016 as a guest lecturer, many students had become interested in the work of the organisation and wanted to learn more, hence the visit.

During the interaction that followed, the students were introduced to the Mental Health and Development (MHD) Model. They had an opportunity to see and question how the MHD model influenced the work of BasicNeeds-Ghana. Available faculty members were on hand to help the students draw connections between principles they had been introduced to while in school and real-world applications and context.

Towards the end of their visit, Dr Goldmann expressed appreciation on behalf of the visiting class. She remarked that a visit to BasicNeeds-Ghana might become a regular part of future "Semester Abroad" programmes to be undertaken by postgraduate students of NYU.

Peter Yaro, commended the students for their interest in mental health and in the work of the BasicNeeds-Ghana. He entreated them to keep up with the ever-changing mental health landscape with an assurance that they were always welcome at BasicNeeds-Ghana.



Visiting NYU Students and Faculty with BasicNeeds-Ghana staff

BasicNeeds-Ghana Participates in 2018 Edition of Global Disability Summit

BasicNeeds-Ghana joined several other organisations and individuals in participation at the 2018 eidtion of the Global Disability Summit held between July 23 and 24, 2018 at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Stadium, London. The Summit was organised by the International Disability Alliance (IDA) under the auspices of the Governments of the United Kingdom and Kenya. BasicNeeds-Ghana's participation was made possible through the support of the Department for International development (DFID) and the Foreign Commonwealth Office in Ghana.

The Summit brought together many important personalities and Organizations in the disability fraternity together to discuss issues of disability, the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and adoption of assistive technology by all governments which is critical to the implementation of the CRPD. The delegation from Ghana was led by the Minister for Gender and Children and Social protection, Madam Otiko Afisah Djaba and included representatives from the Ghana Federation of Disabilities, the Special Mothers Project, University of Ghana and BasicNeeds-Ghana, among others.



Sunday Anaba (left) and Richard Evans of Time to Change

The UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, in her keynote address, said "people with disabilities are often not included in the development process which makes us

all miss out in the contributions they could make". She assured persons with disability of the UK Government's continued support towards achieving disability inclusion in all aspects of development.

The two-day event ended with participants, including the delegation from Ghana, pledging to organise a dissemination session to brief stakeholders in the campaign for inclusion of persons with disability about discussions at the summit and ensure the full effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



From Left: Adrian Sell (CitiesRise), Sue Baker (Time for Change) & Sunday Anaba (BasicNeeds-Ghana)

UNDP Adaptation Fund Project Takes off in Savelugu

BasicNeeds-Ghana has began implementing activities under a dry-season gardening project titled "Promoting Gardening for Improved Mental Health Outcomes and Productivity in Northern Ghana." It is a project that is funded by the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Adaptation Fund.

The project is in line with BasicNeeds-Ghana's vision to support people with psychosocial needs to live and work successfully in their communities. This initiative was also designed to complement on-going efforts to empower individuals suffering from mental illness or epilepsy and their primary carers to become income and

food secure through vegetable gardening. Persons with mental illness and their carers in the Savelugu Municipality, numbering 100, have been identified to benefit from the project.

People suffering from mental illness or epilepsy are among the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. Many of them have been prevented by their condition from taking advantage of local opportunities to better their situation. This, in effect, has further worsened their plight and brought about untold



Participants at the project inception meeting at Zaazi

hardship upon them and their families. The project thus hopes to enable poor and socially excluded persons with mental illness or epilepsy, women and youth in the Savelugu-Nanton Municipality to increase nutrition and income earning capacities through dry season gardening acticities.

Through this project, BasicNeeds-Ghana intends to equip 100 poor and vulnerable persons stabilized from mental illness or epilepsy and their primary carers, 58 of are female, and other women and youth with relevant skills and knowledge to undertake dry

season gardening.

The project beneficiaries will also be supported withgardening tools and equipment and other farm inputs to enable them begin vegetable production.

It is envisaged that the project will boost personal and household incomes and nutrition of beneficiaries and contribute towards reducing engrained societal stigma and discrimination against poor and vulnerable persons living with mental illness or epilepsy and their primary carers.



Participants at the project inception meeting at Libga

Staff of BasicNeeds, Partners Undergo Training in Safeguarding



Irene Agudu taking the participants through DFID's brand guidelines

Staff of BasicNeeds-Ghana and its implementation partners completed a day's training workshop on latest standards in the protection of vulnerable persons and fiduciary responsibility. The training, which came off at the BasicNeeds-Ghana's conference hall on August 20, 2018, was sponsored by the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) and facilitated by officials from DFID's office in Ghana.

In attendance were staff of BasicNeeds-Ghana and its implementation partners namely; Gub Katimali Society (GKS), Centre for People's Empowerment and Rights Initiative (CPRI), Mental Health Society of Ghana (MEHSoG) and MIHOSO International Foundation. During the training workshop, participants were re-oriented in safeguarding principles, branding and communications, as well as fraud detection and avoidance.

Executive Director of BasicNeeds-Ghana, Peter Yaro,

in his welcome statement, conveyed the appraciation of the participating organisations to DFID. He said the training had come at such a time when many organisations had been cited for fiduciary irresponsibility and violation of the rights and dignity of vulnerable peoples. He expressed the hope that the training would equip staff of the organisations to improve their quality of work and thereby positively impact the lives of vulnerable people with mental illness or epilepsy.

Irene Agudu, Programme Manager at DFID, took the participants through DFID's branding and communications guidelines. She stressed on the importance of granting appropriate visibility and recognition to UK aid's support and responsible handling of UK aid brand artefacts and elements.

In her second presentation, Irene Agudu underscored the need for organisations to create a culture that provides a safe and trusted environment for both employees and project beneficiaries. She further noted that for such an environment to become possible, appropriate policies and measures that provided clarity on all aspects of safeguarding were needed. This, she stressed, was the only way for organisations to assume responsibility for protection and safeguarding of the vulnerable people they work with.

During the session on fiduciary responsibility, Martin Kanyagui of DFID's compliance unit re-iterated the UK Government's zero

tolerance for corruption and fraudulent activity. He noted that there was no justification whatsoever for fraudulent behaviour. He highlighted the need for organisations to put in place adequate measures to ensure that people who blew the whistle on suspected fraudulent activity were protected. He also took participants through DFID's investigative processes of suspected or alleged fraud cases.

At the end of the workshop, participants unanimously



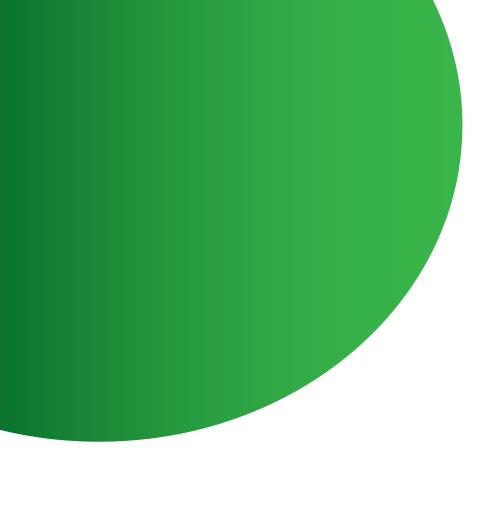
Alhaji Sheikh Abdul-Kareem of GKS making a point during the workshop

expressed their improved appreciation of issues of safeguarding vulnerable people in their programmes.

The team from DFID also took advantage of their visit to assess the impact of BasicNeeds-Ghana's work with people living with mental illness or epilepsy. They visited two BasicNeeds project benficiaries who were undergoing apprenticeship in dressmaking with support of DFID. After the visit, the DFID officials expressed satisfaction at the recovery and rehabilitation of the two beneficiaries.



Martin Kanyagui delivering a presentation on fraud detection and elimination





BasicNeeds-Ghana

Plot No: 143, Industrial Area

Res. Ext. BLK III Revised, Chanshegu,

Tamale-Kumasi Highway

Postal Address: P. O. Box TL1140, Tamale, NR, Ghana.

Digital Address: NT-0237-3385