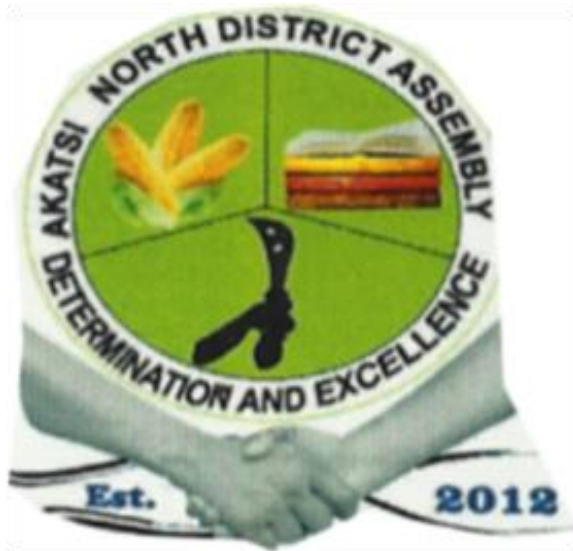


AKATSI NORTH DISTRICT ASSEMBLY



GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

June 2025

BY: District Planning and Coordinating Unit (DPCU)

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
ADVANCE	Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Project
BAC	Business Advisory Center
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHPS	Community-Based Health Planning and Services
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CRPD	Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
D.A.	District Assembly
DPCU	District Planning and Coordinating Unit
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FBO	Farmer-Based Organization
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GES	Ghana Education Service
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GRPB	Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
LI	Legislative Instrument
MAG	Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MTDP	Medium-Term Development Plan
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organization
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NCWD	National Council for Women and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
PHC	Population and Housing Census
PWDs	Person with Disabilities

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIGRA	Strengthening Investments in Gender-Responsive Climate Adaptation
SW&CD	Community Development Section
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VRCC	Volta Regional Coordinating Council
WAJU	Women and Juvenile Unit
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

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1. Introduction

The Akatsi North District, located in the southeastern part of Ghana's Volta Region, was established in 2012 by Legislative Instrument 2012 (L.I. 2161). The District occupies a land size of 324 km² and shares boundaries with Agortime Ziope District to the North, Republic of Togo to the East, Ketu North municipal to the South and Akatsi South municipal to the West.

Akatsi North District's projected population in 2024 was 33,991 with more females (17,791), representing 52.3 percent than males (16,200) constituting 47.8 percent (GSS PHC 2021).

The District has a literacy rate of 58.7% of the population 6 years and older, which is higher among males (68.0%) than females (50.9%) (GSS PHC 2021).

Akatsi North District faces significant challenges related to gender inequality and social exclusion, hindering the overall development and well-being of its citizens. Key issues include: women and girls facing violence and abuse, limited access to education and healthcare, lack of representation and participation by women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes. The negative impact of these key issues influences the need for a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion strategy.

This Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy aims to promote equal opportunities and treatment for all individuals, regardless of their gender, age, intersectionality, disability or social economic status in Akatsi North District.

This approach recognizes that different groups have unique needs and challenges, requiring tailored solutions to address disparity.

The GESI strategy's primary purpose is to ensure that Akatsi North District policies and programmes are inclusive, equitable and responsive to the needs of all citizens in the district.

1.1 International Commitments

The Government of Ghana has ratified a number of international, regional and national frameworks and protocols; such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995; the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) and its Protocol on the Rights of Women (the Maputo Protocol); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); the African Union Agenda 2063, among others.

Ghana, along with other countries and development partners, have also agreed that as stipulated in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 as well as other gender-related SDG targets, adequate and effective financing is essential in realizing the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The UN Secretary General, in his 23rd Review and Appraisal Report, noted that under-investment in gender equality and women's empowerment has contributed to slow and uneven progress in all 12 critical areas of concern to the BPfA. Inadequate financing hinders the implementation of gender-responsive laws, policies and interventions. Additionally, data shows that financing gaps are sometimes as high as 90% with critical shortfalls in infrastructure, productive and economic sectors. Therefore, a gender-responsive focus on budget planning and increasing investments is crucial.

1.2 National Policy and Legal Framework

National policy provides a framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Ghana. It outlines key strategies and commitment for achieving gender equality, including strengthening normative, legal and administrative frameworks. Examples of National Policy and Legal Frameworks are provided below.

Table 1: Overview of the major national commitments to gender equality in Ghana

Year	Lead Institution	Objectives	Beneficiaries
1975	Government of Ghana National Council for Women and Development (NCWD)	To analyze women's issues and implement programs to ensure the full integration of women in national development	Women and girls – promote their participation in national development
2nd Feb. 1986	Government of Ghana	Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Women and girls – ensuring rights and legal protection against gender-based discrimination
1992	Government of Ghana	Enact the 1992 constitution to protect the fundamental human rights of all Ghanaians	All citizens including women, girls and the vulnerable and marginalized population
1998	Government of Ghana Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) of the Ghana Police Service	Established to provide institutional framework to address Violence Against Women and Children	Women and children
1998 (2001)	Government of Ghana, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC) *(MoGCSP was nonexistent) NCWD	Development of the National Gender and Children Policy and its implementation plan Mainstreaming gender and children's issues in policies, programs and institutions	Men and women, boys and girls promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across sectors
2003	Government of Ghana	GPRS I (Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I) Gender mainstreaming into development programs and policies	General population including women
2004	Government of Ghana, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC)	Launch of the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit Provide legal protection for victims of domestic violence	Women and victims of domestic violence ensuring their safety and access to justice
2006	Government of Ghana	Launch of GPRS II	General population with a focus on marginalized groups including women

Year	Lead Institution	Objectives	Beneficiaries
		To continue the gender mainstreaming agenda	
2006	Government of Ghana	Persons with disability Act 2006 (Act No. 715)	An Act that provides for persons with disabilities, to establish a National Council on Persons with Disability and to provide for related matters
2012	Government of Ghana, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	The Affirmative Action Act	Women in politics and decision-making
2012	Government of Ghana	Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Persons with disabilities, ensuring the promotion, protection and full enjoyment of human rights
2013	Government of Ghana, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	Launch of the National Gender Policy and Action Plan for Gender Equality and Equity	Women, children and marginalized groups with a focus on gender equity
2014	Civil Society Organizations	16 days of activism against Gender-Based Violence campaigns. Raising awareness and advocating to end gender-based violence	General population raising awareness about gender-based violence and promoting gender equality
2014	Government of Ghana	The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme	People in vulnerable situations including widows, orphans and persons with disabilities
2015	UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP and others	Launch HeForShe campaign in Ghana. Promote gender equality and women's rights	General population, promoting involvement equality and male involvement
2016	Government of Ghana, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and partners	Implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children in Ghana	Women and children, particularly those at risk of violence and abuse
2017	Government of Ghana	Establishment of the Affirmative Action Bill to increase women's participation in politics and decision-making	Women in politics and decision-making
2017	Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Planting for food and jobs	Small-scale farmers including women
	Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Women in Agriculture Focus on addressing gender disparities in the agriculture sector	Female farmers

Year	Lead Institution	Objectives	Beneficiaries
	Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) Project	Improve gender equality in the agriculture sector	Supports women in various agricultural value chains
2020	Government of Ghana	Land Act 2020 (Act 1036)	There are provisions of gender equality and social protection which talk about acquisition of land and making provisions around discriminatory practices in order not to be denied access to land depending on an individual's gender or in a vulnerable situation
	Government of Ghana, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	Women's Empowerment Fund	Women entrepreneurs in the informal sector
	Ghana Enterprises Agency	Financial programmes to support women entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises	Women entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises

2. Intersectional Gender-Based Analysis

2.1 Commitment to GESI in Akatsi North District

Akatsi North District is strongly committed to advancing gender equality, disability inclusion and social equity across all levels of governance and community life. The district has initiated several programmes and policies aimed at promoting inclusive development and ensuring that no one is left behind.

In terms of gender equality, the district is actively working to increase the participation of women in decision-making processes. Currently, the district has no elected female Assembly Member. However, there are 2 female government appointees, representing 11% of the total 18 Assembly members (Administrative data 2024). Recognizing this imbalance, the district is committed to achieving a minimum of 35% female representation in local governance by 2028 in line with the Affirmative Action law. To this end, the Assembly has initiated focus group discussions that encourage women to participate in district level elections. Additionally, public education campaigns are being organized to sensitize communities about the importance of women's participation in leadership and decision-making.

The district also prioritizes gender-responsive budgeting. 40% of the district's agricultural budget is allocated to programs that empower women and girls, particularly women in the agricultural sector to enhance their economic empowerment. Initiatives include scholarships and mentorship programs for girls, the provision of sanitary facilities in schools and support for women entrepreneurs through access to training, credit and markets.

To address gender-based violence, the district has empowered community stakeholders and opinion leaders to act as first responders, ensuring that cases are reported and resolved through the appropriate channels. Support services for survivors of violence are also being developed as part of the district's commitment to creating a secure environment for all.

On the front of disability inclusion, Akatsi North District has taken significant steps to ensure that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are not excluded from development initiatives. The district is working to make all public buildings, schools and health facilities accessible to people with physical disabilities. In education, efforts are underway to support the enrollment and retention of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. This includes the provision of assistive devices.

To promote economic inclusion, the district offers vocational training programs in skills such as tailoring and hairdressing, specifically targeting women and girls with disabilities. These programs are complemented by the provision of start-up equipment to enable participants to establish their own businesses. Furthermore, the district conducts quarterly community sensitization campaigns aimed at reducing stigma and raising awareness of the rights and capabilities of PWDs. To guide its planning and measure progress, the district is committed to collecting and analyzing data disaggregated by age, sex and disability.

2.2 Social Cultural Context, Including Cultural Norms

The social and cultural landscape of Akatsi North District plays a significant role in shaping opportunities and challenges related to gender equality and social inclusion. The district is mostly patriarchal led by traditional authorities. Traditional councils are mainly led by men and mostly male dominated. This is the reason why women are not coming into the leadership space. Cultural norms in the district place a strong emphasis on respect for elders, with younger individuals expected to show deference through formal greetings and respectful

behavior. Hospitality is also highly valued, with visitors often welcomed with food, drinks, or local beverages such as Akpeteshie or gin. Traditional ceremonies such as festivals, naming ceremonies, marriages and funerals are central to community life, and are observed with great significance.

Religion is another key pillar of the district's social structure. Christianity, Islam and traditional beliefs all influence daily practices, social behaviors and gender roles within families and communities.

Gender roles in Akatsi North are largely shaped by tradition. Men are typically regarded as the heads of households and the primary decision makers, both within the family and in the broader community. They are expected to provide financial support and often dominate public and political spaces. In contrast, women are traditionally responsible for managing the home, raising children and preparing food. Despite these domestic responsibilities, many women also engage in farming, trading and other informal economic activities to support their families.

However, cultural norms continue to pose significant barriers to gender equality. In more communities, women are excluded from owning land or inheriting property, which restricts their economic independence and limits their ability to contribute fully to community development. These deeply ingrained power dynamics and discriminatory practices create a challenging environment for promoting equity, but they also highlight areas where targeted interventions can bring about meaningful change.

2.3 Economic Participation

The district exhibits significant gender disparities in economic participation, particularly in employment, wages and entrepreneurship. Agriculture is the primary economic activity, engaging 80% of respondents, with men dominating large-scale farming while women are more involved in subsistence farming and petty trading. This occupational segregation limits women's income potential and economic resilience (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024).

Income disparities are stark, with 76% of households earning less than 500 GHS per month, below Ghana's minimum wage (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024). Female-headed households (80%) are disproportionately represented in this low-income bracket and no women were reported in the highest income group (2000+ GHS per month). Men have more secondary income sources (38%) compared to women (28%) and engage in activities such as motorcycle taxi (*okada*) driving and artisanal work, while women rely on low-margin trading, further widening the economic gap (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024).

Women face multiple barriers to entrepreneurship, including limited access to productive resources such as land ownership, business capital and access to credit, tools, machines and equipment. Cultural norms reinforce traditional gender roles, assigning women to unpaid care work such as water fetching and childcare which reduces their time for income-generating activities. Additionally, women are underrepresented in local governance, restricting their influence over resource allocation and economic policies.

2.4 Political Representation, Participation in Decision-Making

In the district's governance structure, there is a concerning underrepresentation of women in key decision-making positions. Within the District Assembly, there are no elected female Assembly Members. However, there are two (2) female government appointees, representing only 11% of the total 18 Assembly Members. This falls significantly short of the national target of 30% female representation in local governance structures.

This underrepresentation stems from multiple interconnected factors that create barriers to women's political participation and leadership.

Cultural norms and traditional belief systems continue to pose significant challenges to women's participation in local governance. The deeply entrenched patriarchal systems in the district often view leadership as a male domain, creating invisible but powerful barriers to women's political aspirations. These cultural barriers are particularly evident during election periods, where women candidates often face additional scrutiny and criticism compared to their male counterparts. Also, the lower levels of higher education among women also reduces the confidence of women to participate in leadership and decision-making.

The situation in the Unit Committees, which forms the foundation of local governance, reflects the broader challenges of representation. Female representation at the sub-district level remains low, with only 4 women out of 60 Unit Committee members representing approximately 7% of the total. This limited presence significantly restricts women's influence in grassroots decision-making processes. This underrepresentation at the lowest level of governance creates a ripple effect, reducing the pipeline of experienced women leaders who could potentially serve at higher levels of local government.

Financial barriers significantly impact women's participation in local governance. The high cost of political campaigns, combined with women's generally lower economic status in the district, creates substantial obstacles to their political participation. Women candidates often struggle to raise sufficient campaign funds, limiting their ability to compete effectively in local elections. The situation is further complicated by women's limited access to traditional sources of political funding and support networks.

2.5 Access to Resources and Services

Women and girls in Akatsi North face lower literacy rates (50.9% for women vs. 68% for men) due to cultural biases prioritizing boys' education. Limited secondary and vocational schools force many girls into early marriages or unpaid farm labor. Access to quality education remains a challenge as a result of lack of good social amenities such as school infrastructure, road networks and accommodation facilities for teachers and good drinking water.

Approximately 75% of the district's population lacks health insurance coverage, with women bearing the greatest burden due to maternal and childcare needs (GSS, 2021). The absence of hospitals within the district compels residents to travel long distances to access essential health services. This situation disproportionately affects female-headed households, who also report significantly higher rates of malnutrition, 70.8% compared to 23.5% for male-headed households (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024). Climate-related illnesses, such as heatstroke and respiratory diseases, disproportionately affect women, who have less access to treatment due to cost and mobility constraints.

Only 36% of respondents own land, with females largely excluded due to customary inheritance laws. Female farmers rely on small garden plots, limiting their agricultural productivity. Without land titles, women cannot secure loans or invest in climate-resilient farming, reinforcing cycles of poverty (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024).

Men dominate access to climate adaptation training and agricultural extension services, while women rely on informal networks. Early warning systems for floods and droughts are nearly absent (98% of households receive no alerts), leaving the population especially women who manage water and food unprepared for disasters.

Only 8% of women have access to formal credit, compared to 16% of men. Microfinance programs often exclude female borrowers due to lack of collateral. Male-dominated cooperatives control profitable ventures (e.g., rice processing), while female groups struggle with underfunded palm oil or gari enterprises (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024).

2.6 Unpaid Care Work

The burden of unpaid care work poses a significant barrier to female's economic advancement. Due to the substantial time committed to domestic responsibilities, women have limited opportunities to participate in income-generating activities or access skills training. This contributes to the disproportionate representation of female-headed households (80%) within the district's low-income bracket. Notably, in the latest household level survey, no women were reported in the highest income group earning over GHS 2,000 per month (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024).

The burden of unpaid care work creates significant barriers to women's economic advancement. With such substantial time commitments to domestic duties, women have limited opportunities to engage in income-generating activities or skills training. This helps explain why, among the 76% of households surveyed, a higher proportion of female-headed households fall within the income bracket earning less than GHS 500 per month (Akatsi North Household Survey, 2024). The physical demands of care work, particularly water collection which often requires long walks to distant sources, further restrict women's mobility and ability to participate in markets or community meetings.

These care responsibilities also reinforce gender gaps in education and decision-making. Girls frequently drop out of school to assist with household chores, perpetuating cycles of limited opportunity. At the community level, women's care obligations reduce their ability to attend meetings or participate in governance structures, marginalizing their voices in important decisions that affect their lives.

Climate change is intensifying these existing inequalities. Drought conditions force women to spend even more time searching for water, while floods and crop failures increase the time needed for food preparation and preservation. These climate impacts add to women's unpaid labor without corresponding support systems or recognition of this additional burden.

Current policies and programmes fail to adequately address this issue. The district lacks public childcare services or labor-saving infrastructure that could reduce women's care burdens. Water projects often don't consult women about siting of water facilities, missing opportunities to ease the burden on water collection duties. Most climate adaptation programs focus on male-dominated sectors, overlooking how care work affects community resilience.

2.7 Unequal Impact on Climate Change

In the agricultural sector, approximately 60.2% of the population is engaged in farming activities, with women representing 55% of this workforce (GSS PHC, 2021). Despite their strong presence, women face systemic barriers such as limited access to land, technology and financial resources. Climate variability has further exacerbated their challenges, with prolonged droughts and erratic rainfall patterns reducing crop yields and degrading soil quality. The impact on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) is particularly pronounced, as the physical nature of agricultural labor restricts their participation, thereby limiting their economic empowerment.

Water availability has also been severely affected by climatic changes. The district experiences heightened temperatures and prolonged dry seasons, resulting in the lowering of water tables and reduced access to potable water. This situation disproportionately affects women and children, who bear the responsibility of water collection. In many cases, they are compelled to travel long distances in search of clean water, thereby reducing the time available for educational or income-generating activities and increasing their vulnerability to health issues and exposure to gender-based violence.

In the education sector, gender disparities persist despite ongoing efforts to improve school enrollment and retention. Female students continue to underperform in key academic assessments, as reflected in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE, 2024), where the pass rate for girls stands at only 12.6%, compared to 32% for boys. Adolescent girls face numerous challenges that hinder their academic progression, including early marriage, menstruation-related absenteeism and school-related gender-based violence. These barriers not only affect their educational outcomes but also limit their long-term opportunities for personal and economic development.

Disability also intersects with these challenges, as children with special needs often face stigma and infrastructural barriers that impede access to inclusive education.

Health outcomes are similarly shaped by gender and social factors. Women's health is affected not only by biological factors but also by limited access to quality healthcare, cultural norms and inadequate reproductive health services. Men, on the other hand, often face barriers in accessing mental health support due to societal expectations of masculinity. PWDs face heightened vulnerability due to inaccessible facilities and a lack of specialized health services.

2.8 Commitment to Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting within Akatsi North

Budgeting processes in the district are informed by the Composite Budget Guidelines, which promote gender-based budgeting practices. While this approach is still being strengthened, it provides a structured pathway for ensuring that expenditure decisions are equitable and reflective of diverse community needs. However, gender-responsive budgeting tools such as gender budget statements and expenditure tracking systems are not yet fully institutionalized. While consultations with community stakeholders occur, the district still needs to formalize participatory budgeting processes that ensure marginalized voices particularly those of women, youth and PWDs are heard and reflected in final budgets.

The district has adopted practical tools that further promote gender equality in service delivery. For instance, the Health and Hygiene Educational Tool is used extensively in community outreach to raise awareness on sanitation and health issues with a focus on women, girls and vulnerable groups. These education campaigns not only improve public health outcomes but also empower women to take leadership roles in community hygiene, especially in the area of CLTS.

In the agricultural sector, the Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) Financial Guidelines recommend that at least 40% of agricultural expenditure be directed toward women in agriculture development. Akatsi North has made strides in aligning with this directive by channelling resources into training programs, input distribution and cooperative support targeted at female farmers. This has begun to yield positive outcomes such as increased adoption of climate-smart farming techniques by women and improved food security at the household level.

Policy direction is further supported by the Gender and Development Policy documents (1 & 2), which guide the integration of women in agricultural development programming. These policies have inspired the district to ensure that women are represented in farmer-based organizations and extension services, although more work remains to ensure their participation is meaningful and consistent.

2.9 Key GESI Issues and Gaps

S/N	Thematic Area	Identified Gaps	Proposed Solutions	Lead Institution
1	Governance and Representation	- No elected female Assembly Member. However, 2 female government appointees represent 11% of the total 18 Assembly members - Low representation of women at the sub-district level (Unit committees) with only 4 females out of 60 members, representing about 7% of the total number - Limited participation of women and PWDs in decision-making processes in the communities and the Assembly	- Leadership development and mentorship. Coopting women into some level of Assembly decision-making processes - Make deliberate efforts to hold segregated focus group dialogues such as with women and vulnerable group to gather their opinion for decision-making - Identify and engage male allies who will support/champion women empowerment activities - Work with political parties to implement the Affirmative Action Law	Gender Desk Officer Social Welfare and Community Development Department NCCE Assembly Members
2	Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Services	- Inadequate fund availability despite 40% gender-related activities in the Agric sector budget - Lack of support services for gender-based violence survivors such as DOVVSU facilities, medical facility support, isolation centers - Lack of political will to prioritize and implement Gender-Responsive Budgeting - Limited participation of women and girls in the planning and budgeting processes of the Assembly - Limited capacity of staff to effectively plan and implement Gender-Responsive Budget	- Allocate funds for key services (<i>i.e.</i>, gender-focused activities and support services) - Emergency support fund for victims - Getting the buy-in of political heads on the relevance of Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Services - Incorporating of gendered perspective in the design of projects - Adequate resource provision to support broader stakeholders (focus groups) in the planning and budgeting processes	District Finance Office Planning Unit Social Welfare and Community Development Gender Desk Officer

S/N	Thematic Area	Identified Gaps	Proposed Solutions	Lead Institution
3	Disability Inclusion	- Limited access particularly with the old infrastructure for PWDs - Risk of unsustainable educational programs for PWDs due to funding - Persistent stigma against PWDs - Inadequate allocation of funds for PWDs related activities - Limited user-friendly educational facilities and teaching and learning resources for PWDs - Inadequate instructors to handle PWDs in inclusive schools	- Train teachers on inclusive education - Link vocational training to business hub - Media campaigns to combat stigma - Develop partnership with CSOs to support Disability Inclusion - Implement incentive systems for teachers who accept postings to deprived communities - Integrate disability friendly system into building	Social Welfare and Community Development Ghana Education Service (GES) Works Department NGOs/CSOs District Planning Unit
4	Cultural Norms and Social Structures	- Entrenched gender roles and stereotypes that limit women's opportunities - Patrilineal land ownership system restricts women's access and control of land, limiting their ability to cultivate high-value cash crops - Patriarchal community leadership and household systems limit women's involvement in public decision-making - Women disproportionately carry the burden of unpaid care work and household responsibilities	- Organize community dialogues and sensitization sessions with traditional leaders, chiefs and landowners on the importance of equitable access to land for women - Support men's involvement in household and care responsibilities through behavior change communication programs - Promote intergenerational and male-led advocacy on transforming social norms and breaking harmful gender stereotypes	Traditional Authorities Social Welfare and Community Development Gender Desk Officer NCCE
5	Economic Participation	- High income inequality with men having more secondary income sources, 38% compared to women 28% - Women's limited access to productive resources like farm machinery, fertilizers/farm input, processing facilities, storage facilities, capital, access to credit - Low entrepreneurial and business management skills, particularly among women	- Train and sensitize farmers, particularly women, on modern farming techniques including mechanized farming and climate-smart agriculture - Facilitate the formation of women-led farmer-based organizations (FBOs) and cooperatives to ease access to financial schemes and input support - Establish and upgrade local market facilities to provide safe and hygienic trading spaces for women	Department of Agriculture Business Advisory Centre (BAC) Gender Desk Officer Planning Unit

S/N	Thematic Area	Identified Gaps	Proposed Solutions	Lead Institution
		• Low capacity of women in the operation of farm machinery • Lack of market facilities for traders, particularly women • Limited knowledge in modern farming technologies	• Provide business management and financial literacy training through BAC and other partners • Liaise with Department of Agriculture to include women in agricultural extension services and access to farm machinery	
6	Healthcare	• Limited access to NHIS registration services due to distance and lack of mobile teams • No functional hospital in the district to handle referrals or emergency care • Inadequate delivery beds and equipment in health centres and CHPS compounds endangering maternal health • Low family planning uptake due to religious and cultural resistance	• Partner with NHIS to conduct mobile registration exercises in hard-to-reach communities • Advocate for speedy completion and equipping of the District Hospital under the Agenda 111 initiative • Provide delivery kits, sterilization equipment and logistics to CHPS zones to improve maternal health outcomes • Conduct targeted sensitization on family planning in collaboration with traditional leaders, women's groups and faith-based organizations	District Health Directorate (GHS) NHIS District Office Social Welfare and Community Development
7	Climate Change	• Limited economic opportunities force women into unsustainable livelihoods like charcoal production, leading to bush burning and tree cutting, which worsens soil erosion and carbon emissions • Drying up of dams and streams due to erratic rainfall and overuse, force females to walk longer distances for water • Absence of localized early warning systems leaves households unprepared for disasters like floods and droughts	• Train and support women to adopt alternative livelihoods such as cassava processing, beekeeping and mushroom farming to reduce reliance on charcoal burning • Promote rainwater harvesting at the household level and invest in borehole drilling and mechanization to reduce water scarcity • Establish and train community-based disaster response teams (including women, youth and PWDs) to respond quickly to climate emergencies • Partner with NADMO to introduce early warning information systems using radio and community information centres	Environmental Health Unit Department of Agriculture NADMO Works CWSA

Table 2: Strategic and practical GESI needs summary

Thematic Area	Practical GESI Needs	Strategic GESI Needs
Governance and Representation	- There is a need to practically increase the involvement of women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the decision-making processes at both the Assembly and sub-district levels. This includes the co-option of capable women and PWDs into Sub-Committees, as well as facilitating their participation in community dialogues and stakeholder meetings. - Furthermore, there is a need to organize capacity-building programs such as leadership development and mentorship initiatives that target women and vulnerable groups to build their confidence and skills for effective participation in governance. - Male allyship must be encouraged through the identification and training of male champions who actively support women's participation in leadership.	- The district must establish mechanisms that promote long-term inclusive governance. This includes advocating for and institutionalizing affirmative action policies that ensure political parties and appointing authorities prioritize gender balance. - The district must also integrate gender and social inclusion into its governance frameworks and processes to ensure that inclusivity becomes a permanent and cross-cutting principle.
Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Services	- On a practical level, the Assembly needs to allocate specific and adequate financial resources for gender-focused services and programs. This includes creating emergency support funds for survivors of gender-based violence, providing psychosocial support and establishing safe shelters and referral mechanisms. - There is also a need to build the capacity of the Assembly's planning, budget and finance staff to understand and implement gender-responsive budgeting principles. - Women and vulnerable groups must be actively involved in community and district-level budget planning sessions to ensure their needs are reflected in final plans.	- The district must adopt a gender-responsive budgeting framework that is integrated into its Medium-Term Development Plans and Annual Action Plans. - Political leadership must be sensitized and committed to implementing budgeting that considers gender equity and the specific needs of marginalized groups. - Long-term planning must also ensure that all projects undergo gender and social inclusion analysis before funding, implementation and evaluation stages.
Disability Inclusion	- There is a need to provide accessible physical infrastructure that caters to the needs of persons with disabilities. Existing school and public buildings should be retrofitted to become disability friendly. - There must also be practical efforts to train more teachers in inclusive education methodologies and to supply teaching and learning aids specifically designed for children with special needs. - PWDs should be equipped with livelihood and vocational skills to promote self-reliance, especially through linkages with the Business Advisory Centre (BAC).	- Disability inclusion must be mainstreamed into all sectors of the Assembly's work, including education, infrastructure and economic development. This involves policy reform and the development of district-specific guidelines that prioritize accessibility and equal opportunities. - Partnerships with disability rights organizations should be established to support sustained inclusion efforts. - Long-term public awareness campaigns are needed to combat stigma and discrimination and to change community attitudes towards PWDs.

Thematic Area	Practical GESI Needs	Strategic GESI Needs
Cultural Norms and Social Structures	- There is a practical need to engage community stakeholders, especially traditional authorities, in dialogue aimed at reforming cultural practices that reinforce gender inequality. - Women must be supported to access land through community land-sharing arrangements and traditional dispute resolution platforms. - Additionally, there is a need to hold community education programs to challenge stereotypes and to promote shared responsibilities in caregiving and household chores.	- The district must integrate gender-transformative approaches in its community development initiatives. This includes the formal engagement of traditional leaders as allies in dismantling harmful practices and the promotion of rights-based education for men and boys. - Cultural and religious institutions should be brought on board as key partners to create an enabling environment where both women and men can thrive equally. - District bylaws and community-level policies should reflect progressive gender norms and be enforced equitably.
Economic Participation	- There is an urgent need to provide training for women and other marginalized groups in modern farming technologies, agribusiness management and entrepreneurship. - Women should be supported to form and register Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs) and cooperatives to improve their access to financial resources and productive assets like machinery, fertilizers and storage facilities. - Market infrastructure must also be improved to support female traders, including nursing mothers and PWDs.	- The Assembly must ensure that women's economic empowerment is central to the district's economic development strategy. This includes incorporating gender-sensitive financing schemes, creating platforms for market access and developing partnerships with financial institutions and private sector actors. - Facilitate policy implementation that supports equal access to credit and extension services for women and other vulnerable groups. - Monitoring systems should also be put in place to track gender equity in economic outcomes.
Education	- Support brilliant but needy female students through scholarships and mentorship opportunities. - School infrastructure must be improved to include gender-sensitive facilities such as changing rooms attached to WASH facilities. - The coverage of school feeding programs must also be expanded to reduce absenteeism, especially among girls in underserved communities.	- Strategically, the district must prioritize the promotion of girl-child education in all its education policies and interventions. - Long-term programs should focus on reducing dropout rates among girls by addressing cultural, economic and safety-related barriers. - Complementary education programs must be enhanced for out-of-school girls and adult women who never had formal education. - The district should also promote the deployment of more female teachers to serve as role models in schools.

Thematic Area	Practical GESI Needs	Strategic GESI Needs
Healthcare	- The district needs to liaise with the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to establish mobile registration centers in hard-to-reach areas. - Existing health facilities must be equipped with delivery beds and emergency maternal health equipment to reduce maternal and child mortality. - There is also a need to increase family planning awareness through outreach campaigns, especially in culturally conservative communities.	- The Assembly should integrate gender and social inclusion in the district's health planning processes. This includes advocating for the early completion of the district hospital and ensuring that health outreach services are equitably distributed. - Effective implementation of policies that prioritize reproductive health and preventive care, especially for women and adolescents. - Develop strong partnerships with the Ghana Health Service and other health-focused NGOs should be pursued to ensure sustainability and efficiency.
Climate Change	- Practical steps must be taken to train women and youth in alternative sustainable livelihoods such as beekeeping, cassava, tomato processing and other eco-friendly income-generating activities. - Households should be encouraged and supported to install water harvesting systems and the district should drill and mechanize boreholes in water-scarce areas. - Local disaster response teams should be trained and equipped to handle climate emergencies, including floods and droughts.	- Climate adaptation planning must be inclusive of the unique vulnerabilities and capacities of women, PWDs and youth. - Gender-responsive climate resilience should be a key component of the district's Environmental Management Plan. - The Assembly must develop partnerships with environmental CSOs and relevant national institutions like the EPA to access technical support and funding. - Early warning systems must also be developed and made accessible to all community members.

Table 3: Template for intersectional Gender Equality and Social Inclusion strategy

Impact/ Content Area(s)	Priority (1 being highest, 3 being lowest)	District Objectives	District Actions	Evidence for gap or need and who will benefit	Responsible person/department for meeting the objective	Partners or champion institutions	Indicators/outputs that can be used to measure progress
Governance and Representation	1	<i>Objective 1:</i> Increase women's participation and representation in decision-making at all levels. <i>Objective 2:</i> To promote inclusive participation in governance processes at the community level.	Organize leadership training and mentorship programs for women. Co-opt women and PWDs into key statutory sub-committee discussions. Hold segregated focus groups (e.g., women, PWDs) to gather input into planning.	Women represent only 11% of Assembly Members (2 out of 18) and only 4 out of 60 Unit Committee members are female. This shows low female representation. PWDs and women often lack access to spaces where decisions are made. Beneficiaries include women, youth and PWDs	District Coordinating Director, Planning Unit, Gender Desk	VRCC, NCCE, NGOs/CSOs (SIGRA), Traditional Authorities	Number of leadership training sessions conducted Percentage increase in women's and PWDs' representation in sub-committees Number of women participating in focus groups
Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Services	1	<i>Objective 1:</i> To integrate gender considerations into all district-level budgeting and planning processes. <i>Objective 2:</i> To improve access to gender-sensitive services and support systems.	Train Assembly staff on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB). Allocate specific funds for gender-focused projects and support services for GBV survivors.	Despite 40% of the Agric sector budget being related to gender, limited funds are available. There are no shelters or services for GBV survivors and participation of women in budgeting is limited. Women and survivors of abuse	District Budget Analyst, Gender Desk Officer, Planning Unit	Akatsi North D.A., MOFA, Ministry of Finance	Number of GRB training sessions held Number of staff trained Percentage of budget that targets gender equality outcomes Number of women involved in MTDP preparation

Impact/ Content Area(s)	Priority (1 being highest, 3 being lowest)	District Objectives	District Actions	Evidence for gap or need and who will benefit	Responsible person/department for meeting the objective	Partners or champion institutions	Indicators/outputs that can be used to measure progress
			Involve women and vulnerable groups in the planning and budgeting cycle.	are the primary beneficiaries.			Percentage of budgeted activities that include gender analysis or sex-disaggregated data Use of gender budgeting guideline or checklist in planning cycles Planning documents that explicitly address gender equality objectives Number of women involved in budget hearings
Disability Inclusion	2	<i>Objective 1:</i> To ensure accessibility to infrastructure, education and training for PWDs.	Retrofit existing public infrastructure to make it disability friendly. Train inclusive education teachers and provide disability-sensitive learning materials.	PWDs face mobility challenges due to inaccessible infrastructure. There are inadequate learning materials and teachers trained in inclusive education. PWDs also face discrimination.	Works Dept., District Education Directorate	VRCC, Akatsi North D.A., GES, SW&CD	Number of accessible public buildings Number of teachers trained in inclusive education Number of community sensitization events held

Impact/ Content Area(s)	Priority (1 being highest, 3 being lowest)	District Objectives	District Actions	Evidence for gap or need and who will benefit	Responsible person/department for meeting the objective	Partners or champion institutions	Indicators/outputs that can be used to measure progress
		<i>Objective 2:</i> To reduce stigma and promote inclusion of PWDs in all aspects of community life.	Launch public sensitization campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination.	Beneficiaries include children with disabilities and adult PWDs.			
Cultural Norms and Social Structures	2	<i>Objective 1:</i> To transform negative socio-cultural norms that limit women's rights and participation. <i>Objective 2:</i> To promote equitable access to land and decision-making spaces for women.	Organize community dialogues with traditional leaders on women's access to land. Conduct awareness campaigns on gender roles and shared household responsibilities. Develop by-laws to support women's access to productive resources.	Patriarchal and patrilineal systems in Akatsi North limit women's access to land and leadership roles. Cultural stereotypes reinforce gender inequality. Women and girls will benefit most.	District Coordinating Director, Planning Unit, Gender Desk	VRCC, Akatsi North D.A.	Number of dialogue sessions with chiefs held on women's rights and participation Percentage of women reporting access to land
Economic Participation	3	<i>Objective 1:</i> To increase women's access to economic resources and opportunities.	Organize training for women on business skills and modern farming technologies. Facilitate the formation and registration of women-led cooperatives.	Women have less access to farm inputs, machinery and capital. Only 28% of women have secondary income compared to 38% of men.	District Agric Director District Business Advisory Officer	VRCC, MOFA, Akatsi North D.A.	Number of women trained in alternative livelihoods Number of women's cooperatives formed

Impact/ Content Area(s)	Priority (1 being highest, 3 being lowest)	District Objectives	District Actions	Evidence for gap or need and who will benefit	Responsible person/department for meeting the objective	Partners or champion institutions	Indicators/outputs that can be used to measure progress
		<i>Objective 2:</i> To build capacity of women and youth in modern agricultural practices and entrepreneurship.	Improve market infrastructure, particularly in rural trading centers.	Women traders and smallholder farmers will benefit.			Percentage improvement in income levels among women beneficiaries
Education	2	<i>Objective 1:</i> To improve learning outcomes and school retention rates for girls. <i>Objective 2:</i> To expand educational support for out-of-school and disadvantaged girls.	Provide scholarships and mentorship for brilliant but needy girls. Construct WASH facilities with changing rooms in schools. Expand school feeding program coverage to underserved schools.	Girls underperform academically due to cultural practices, household chores, poor infrastructure and poverty. Only 12 out of 38 schools benefit from school feeding. Girls are the main beneficiaries.	District Education Directorate, Assembly's Education Sub-Committees	GES, Akatsi North D.A.	Number of scholarships awarded to girls % of retention or dropout rates for girls Number of schools with gender-sensitive WASH facilities Percentage increase in school feeding coverage
Healthcare	2	<i>Objective 1:</i> To improve maternal and reproductive health services in the district.	Liaise with NHIS to set up mobile registration points in remote areas. Provide essential maternal health equipment to health centers.	There is no hospital in the district and equipment in health centers is inadequate. Many residents are not enrolled in NHIS.	District Health Directorate, NHIS Desk Officer	GHS	Number of new NHIS registrants (women and vulnerable groups) Number of facilities equipped with maternal health logistics

Impact/ Content Area(s)	Priority (1 being highest, 3 being lowest)	District Objectives	District Actions	Evidence for gap or need and who will benefit	Responsible person/department for meeting the objective	Partners or champion institutions	Indicators/outputs that can be used to measure progress
		<i>Objective 2:</i> To increase health insurance coverage among vulnerable groups.	Conduct reproductive health and family planning outreach.	Women and children in hard-to-reach areas will benefit.			Family planning uptake rate among women of reproductive age
Climate Change	1	<i>Objective 1:</i> To build the resilience of women and youth to climate-induced risks. <i>Objective 2:</i> To enhance access to water and promote environmental conservation.	Train women in alternative livelihoods (e.g., beekeeping, food processing). Promote water harvesting and borehole development in affected communities. Establish and train local disaster response teams including women and PWDs.	Erratic rainfall and deforestation increase women's workload and food insecurity. Charcoal burning is high due to lack of alternatives. Women and youth in climate-vulnerable areas will benefit.	District NADMO Officer, Agric Department, Environmental Health Unit	VRCC	Number of women trained in alternative livelihoods Number of new water systems installed (e.g., boreholes) Number of functional community disaster response teams formed

3. Conclusion

The development of this Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy for Akatsi North District represents a critical step towards creating a more just, equitable and inclusive society. The issues identified ranging from unequal access to resources, limited representation in decision-making, economic exclusion, inadequate healthcare and education access, to the disproportionate impact of climate change are not just statistical gaps but lived realities that many women, girls, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in the district face daily.

What this strategy offers is not just a policy document, but a people-centered roadmap. It reflects the voices of the community, especially those who are often unheard. It is a call to action for duty bearers, traditional authorities, community leaders, development partners and citizens alike to work together toward inclusive governance, responsive budgeting and transformative change.

Akatsi North is not short of resilience or potential, it is rich in culture, solidarity and community spirit. But for the district to thrive in a truly sustainable and inclusive manner, that potential must be unlocked across gender, age, ability and background. Everyone must have a seat at the table, not as a token, but as an equal contributor to the district's progress.

By institutionalizing the actions and priorities outlined in this GESI strategy and fostering partnerships that put inclusion at the heart of development, Akatsi North can become a model for inclusive local governance. The future we envision is one where girls finish school with confidence, women lead in decision-making spaces, persons with disabilities participate fully in public life, and all individuals live free from violence and discrimination.

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List of Participants

Name	Sex	Designation
Promise Avorgbedor	Male	Human Resource Manager, Ghana Education Service
Kwaku Baffour Asare	Male	District Planning Officer
Yeboah Ebenezer	Male	District Statistical Officer
Rita A.A. Dadzie	Female	Budget Analyst
Johnson Asinyo	Male	Health Information Officer, Ghana Health Service
Rubby Sitsope Besagah	Female	District Coordinating Director
Isaac Abanga	Male	Social Welfare/Gender Desk Officer
Elikplim Amegashie	Male	District Finance Officer
Bridget Y. Sah	Female	District Director of Agric
Eric Amekoenyo	Male	District Works Engineer
Zakaria Abukari	Male	District Environmental Health Officer
Thywill Eyra Kpe	Female	Regional Director, Department of Gender

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Annex 1: Gender Analysis Framework – Using the Harvard Analytical Framework

Tool 1: Activity Profile

Activity	Women/Girls (specify intersectional identity factors such as age, ethnicity and disability where relevant)	Men/Boys (specify intersectional identity factors such as age, ethnicity and disability where relevant)
Productive Activity		
Agriculture: subsistence farming	Women, especially older women and those from marginalized ethnic groups, dominate subsistence farming.	Men, particularly younger men, engage in large-scale farming and cash crop production.
Income-generating activities	Petty trading, small-scale processing (e.g., gari production).	Motorcycle taxi driving, artisanal work.
Climate adaptation activities	Limited access to training; rely on informal networks.	Dominant access to climate adaptation training and resources.
Reproductive/Household Activities		
Water collection	Women and girls spend more hours daily fetching water.	Minimal involvement.
Cooking, cleaning, childcare	Primary responsibility for all household chores.	Minimal involvement.
Care for the elderly/infirm	Women provide most caregiving.	Minimal involvement.
Social/Political/Religious Activities		
Community decision-making	Limited participation: cultural norms restrict involvement.	Dominant leadership roles.
District planning and budgeting	Low representation (11% in Assembly).	High representation and control.

Tool 2: Access and Control Profile – Resources and Benefits

Resources/ Benefits	Access (Women/Girls)	Access (Men/Boys)	Control (Women/Girls)	Control (Men/Boys)
Land	Limited access	Full access; inherit and own land.	Rarely control land titles.	Full control over land use and decisions.
Credit	8% access to formal credit; rely on microfinance.	16% access to formal credit; use loans for large-scale ventures.	Limited control over loan use.	Full control over financial decisions.
Education	Lower literacy rates (50.9%); girls often drop out early.	Higher literacy rates (68%); boys prioritized for education.	Limited decision- making power over education.	Greater influence over educational choices.
Climate adaptation resources	Minimal access to training or tools.	Primary recipients of training and equipment.	No control over resource allocation.	Control distribution and use of resources.

Tool 3: Influencing Factors

Influencing Factors	Constraints	Opportunities
Cultural/religious norms	Patriarchal systems limit women's roles.	Engage traditional leaders to advocate for gender equity.
Economic factors	Women lack access to credit and productive resources.	Promote women's cooperatives and gender-responsive budgeting.
Political factors	Low female representation in governance (11%).	Implement Affirmative Action policies to increase participation.
Climate change	Women bear disproportionate burdens (e.g., water scarcity).	Train women in climate-resilient livelihoods (e.g., beekeeping, soap making).

Annex 2: GESI Strategy Template for Akatsi North District

Impact Area	District Objective	Actions	Indicators
Governance and Representation	Increase women's and PWDs' participation and representation in decision-making at all levels.	Organize leadership and mentorship training for women and PWDs. Co-opt women and PWDs into key sub-committees. Conduct segregated focus group discussions to gather their input into planning.	% Increase of women in governance roles Number of women/PWDs in focus groups. Number of leadership training sessions conducted.
Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Services	Integrate gender considerations into all planning and budgeting processes.	Train Assembly staff on GRB principles. Allocate funds for gender-focused services. Involve women and vulnerable groups in MTDP and budget hearings.	Number of GRB training sessions held Number of staff trained Percentage of budget that targets gender equality outcomes Number of women involved in MTDP preparation Percentage of budgeted activities that include gender analysis or sex-disaggregated data Use of gender budgeting guideline or checklist in planning cycles Planning documents that explicitly address gender equality objectives
Disability Inclusion	Ensure accessible infrastructure and inclusive services for PWDs.	Retrofit public buildings for accessibility. Train teachers in inclusive education. Organize stigma reduction campaigns.	Number of accessible public buildings. Number of inclusive education teachers trained. Number of anti-stigma campaigns conducted.

Impact Area	District Objective	Actions	Indicators
Cultural Norms and Social Structures	Transform harmful socio-cultural practices and increase women's access to land and leadership.	Organize dialogues with traditional leaders on land and gender roles. Develop and promote district level gender-sensitive bylaws. Implement male-led advocacy on equitable caregiving.	Number of dialogue sessions with traditional authorities on women's access to land and leadership. Number of gender-sensitive bylaws passed. % increase of women reporting secure land access.
Economic Participation	Improve women's access to skills, credit, and income-generating opportunities.	Train women in modern farming and entrepreneurship. Support formation of women-led cooperatives. Improve rural market infrastructure.	Number of women trained. Number of women's cooperatives formed. % increase in income among female beneficiaries.
Education	Improve girls' access to education, reduce dropouts, and promote retention.	Provide scholarships and mentorship for brilliant but needy girls. Construct WASH, changing rooms in schools. Expand school feeding programme.	Number of scholarships awarded to girls % of retention or dropout rates for girls Number of schools with gender-sensitive WASH facilities Percentage increase in school feeding coverage
Healthcare	Improve maternal and reproductive health and increase NHIS coverage.	Conduct NHIS mobile registration in remote communities. Equip CHPS compounds with delivery beds and emergency care equipment. Conduct family planning and reproductive health outreach.	Number of vulnerable women registered with NHIS. Number of health facilities equipped. % increase in family planning uptake.

Impact Area	District Objective	Actions	Indicators
Climate Change and Resilience	Build resilience of vulnerable groups to climate change effects.	Train women and youth in alternative eco-livelihoods. Promote rainwater harvesting and mechanized boreholes. Form and train disaster response teams.	Number of women trained in alternative livelihoods. Number of new water systems installed. Number of community disaster teams formed and trained.