



**Final Report
2025**

Enhancing Data-Driven Governance

**Empowering Ghana's
Parliament through the Data
for Accountability Project**

Author

Agnes Titriku

With contributions from Rasheed Draman, Omar Seidu, Issifu Lampo, Alfred Kumah, Rachel Makokha and Emmeline Henderson.

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Contact

Agnes Titriku, ACEPA

info@acepa-africa.org

acepa-africa.org

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Mpuntusem

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Magda Castría

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Acronyms

ACEPA	African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs
APRs	Annual Progress Reports
AU	African Union
CDD	Ghana Center for Democratic Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAP	Data for Accountability Project
DIWA	Development Impact West Africa project
EIPM	Evidence-Informed Policy Making
GIMPA	Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration
IDRIG	Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MPs	Members of Parliament
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NSS	National Statistics System
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations



Foreword by Dr. Rasheed Draman

**Executive Director, African Centre
for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA)**

AUGUST 2025

At the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), we have long believed that strong, effective, and representative parliaments are essential to the democratic and developmental aspirations of the African continent. Central to this vision is the ability of parliaments to use data and evidence to make informed decisions, hold governments to account, and ensure that no citizen is left behind. In a world increasingly shaped by data, the ability of public institutions to use evidence to guide decision-making has never been more important.

The Data for Accountability Project (DAP) emerges at this critical juncture - where democracy, sustainable development, and evidence intersect - to demonstrate what is possible when institutions commit to becoming more transparent, data-literate, and citizen-focused.

Implemented by a consortium of dedicated partners - ACEPA, the Ghana Statistical Service, INASP, and OTT Consulting - and supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, DAP stands as a pioneering effort to embed data use within the everyday work of the Parliament of Ghana. Across two phases, the project has fostered a deeper connection between data producers and data users, advancing not only the technical capacities of Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff but also laying the groundwork for a broader culture of evidence-informed governance.



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Data alone is not enough. It is through the relationships built that data becomes meaningful, actionable, and ultimately transformative.”

This report chronicles the second phase of DAP (2021–2025), offering not only an account of achievements but also candid reflections on the lessons learned. It tells the story of a parliament strengthening its ability to oversee Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of

statisticians becoming more engaged with policy actors, and of cross-sector collaboration unlocking new pathways for inclusive and informed development. But beyond the technical achievements, DAP is also a story of trust: building trust between institutions, between people, and in the power of data to make policymaking more inclusive and accountable. Through its work, DAP has helped shift mindsets, strengthen relationships, and unlock new possibilities for using evidence to serve citizens better.

At the heart of this work lies a simple but powerful idea: data alone is not enough. It is through the relationships built - between institutions, individuals, and sectors - that data becomes meaningful, actionable, and ultimately transformative.

As Executive Director of ACEPA, I am proud of what DAP has accomplished. But more importantly, I am hopeful about what lies ahead. May this report serve as both a reflection and a resource for others working to bridge the gap between data and democratic accountability. It is my sincere desire that the insights shared here inspire others working at the intersection of governance, data, and development - whether in Ghana or elsewhere - to continue pushing for systems that are more open, more responsive, and more accountable.



Message from Dr. Alhassan Iddrisu

**Government Statistician,
Ghana Statistical Service**

Accountability is central to democratic governance, and data is its most powerful enabler. Parliaments, as the people’s representatives, require timely, disaggregated, and trusted information to make laws, exercise oversight, and ensure that citizens’ needs are met. When parliaments are equipped to use evidence effectively, they are better able to hold governments accountable, strengthen trust, and advance national development. The Data for Accountability Project has been a vital step in advancing this vision in Ghana.

Implemented in two phases between 2019 and 2025, DAP sought to strengthen the capacity of the Parliament of Ghana to use statistics to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and contribute to the growth of the African evidence-informed field in research and practice while building stronger linkages with the Ghana Statistical Service and other data producers. Phase II built on the foundations of Phase I by responding to new accountability challenges, including a hung Parliament in 2020, the introduction of Private Members’ Bills, and the lingering effects of COVID-19, while consolidating gains and extending partnerships to district statisticians, civil society organizations, and the media.

“

Together, we have shown what is possible when partnerships bridge politics, data, and citizen voices in the service of democracy.”

Grounded in political economy analysis, DAP tailored interventions to Ghana's evolving governance context. More than 100 Members of Parliament were trained and supported to scrutinize Annual Progress Reports and Audit Committee reports, and to apply tools such as the Community Score Card to education oversight. Over 120 parliamentary staff enhanced their skills in sourcing and presenting evidence, including through GSS's StatsBank and new data products like infographics and policy briefs. District Statisticians applied the Administrative Data Template to generate local-level data for decision-making. Collectively, these initiatives supported the establishment of the Data Management Department in Parliament, a landmark institutional mechanism to sustain evidence use.

Equally significant was the strengthening of collaboration between Parliament, GSS, and other data producers. Constituency Profile Reports, Data Fairs, and joint training activities deepened systemic relationships that now extend beyond individual champions. For the first time in Ghana's history, the Government Statistician briefed Parliament in its Chamber in 2021 and again in 2025 before the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Economy and Development. These were clear signs of cultural and institutional change strengthened by DAP.

The Project's influence has gone beyond Ghana. Through international conferences, case studies, and global learning networks, DAP has positioned African parliaments as important actors in the evidence-informed policymaking field. It has also shown how political realities - election cycles, new legislative tools, or even pandemics - can be navigated to ensure that evidence is not only produced but used.

The journey was not without challenges: electioneering limited MPs' availability, staff reshuffling in Parliament required adaptation, and a hung Parliament demanded careful engagement. Yet through flexibility and adaptability, needs assessments, and trusted relationships with parliamentary leadership and staff, these challenges became opportunities to innovate. Key lessons have emerged: the importance of engaging both leaders and technical staff, building institutional memory, strengthening parliamentary champions, and ensuring that evidence is accessible, relevant, and easy to use.

As the Government Statistician, I am proud of what this Project represents. It has demonstrated that when parliaments are supported to use data, they can transform governance and improve lives. It has reinforced the vision of GSS being *the trusted provider of official statistics for good governance*. Above all, it has shown that accountability, when anchored in evidence, is a practical tool for inclusive development.

On behalf of GSS, I warmly acknowledge with deep gratitude the commitment of our partners - the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs, OTT Consulting, INASP, and the Parliament of Ghana - and the generous support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Together, we have shown what is possible when partnerships bridge politics, data, and citizen voices in the service of democracy.

I trust that the lessons captured in this report will serve not only as a record of achievement but as an indispensable resource for advancing accountability. The experiences and insights presented here offer practical guidance for policymakers, parliamentarians, statisticians, and partners committed to strengthening evidence use in governance. By showcasing what is possible when data and democracy intersect, this report provides both a blueprint for sustaining progress in Ghana and a reference point for parliaments across Africa and beyond.

DAP Partners

Implementing Partners



ACEPA

The African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) is an African not-for-profit organization incorporated in Ghana on 5th October 2012, with a mission to “work to strengthen African Parliaments to be more effective and impactful representative bodies”. ACEPA has supported and worked with more than 20 parliaments at the national, sub-regional and continental level. ACEPA is headquartered in Accra, Ghana and currently has project teams based in Kenya and Togo. ACEPA's core areas of work include, but are not limited to, i) parliamentary reform, ii) evidence-informed policymaking and sustainable development goals, iii) gender equality and social inclusion, iv) accountability, and v) freedom of religion or belief.



GSS

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) is Ghana's national statistical office, with a mission to lead the efficient production and management of high-quality official statistics based on international standards, using competent staff for evidence-based decision-making, in support of national development. It is the central agency in Ghana mandated to produce and disseminate official statistics. It plays a critical role in providing accurate, timely and reliable data that supports policy formulation, decision-making and national development.



OTT Consulting (PHASE 2)

OTT Consulting is a global consultancy platform for change that supports and strengthens the work of research organizations, foundations, governments and others in support of better-informed decision making. Their consultancy work focuses on developing tailored solutions to specific challenges. Through services spanning research, strategy, evaluation, learning facilitation, and organizational transformation, they partner with organizations to drive evidence-informed change. OTT Consulting is a leading global source of information, support and community for people working in, with, and funding think tanks. OTT Consulting creates a space to connect, learn and exchange knowledge, ideas and resources.



INASP (PHASE 1)

INASP is an international development organization with a global network of partners in Africa, Latin America and Asia. With a vision of research and knowledge at the heart of development, INASP works to support individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, which can transform lives. INASP has worked with partners across 28 countries, supporting all aspects of research and knowledge systems, from facilitating the provision of information to researchers to helping parliamentarians and civil servants to use research and evidence in policymaking.



Parliament of Ghana

The Parliament of Ghana is one of the three arms of government. It serves as the legislative branch, responsible for making laws, overseeing the executive, and representing the interests of citizens and constituents. The Parliament of Ghana is a unicameral legislature with one legislative Chamber composed of 276 Members of Parliament from 276 constituencies across the country. In Ghana, the legislative power is vested in Parliament (Article 93 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana). Members of Parliament (MPs) are supported by the staff of the Parliamentary Service. The main purpose of the Parliamentary Service is to enable and facilitate the work of Parliamentarians through the provision of support services such as the provision of administrative, technical and logistical support to MPs, committees, and the institution as a whole, to ensure the smooth functioning of its legislative, oversight and representative mandate.

Funder



William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is a grant maker focused on investing in creative thinkers and problem solvers who are working to ensure everyone has a meaningful opportunity to thrive. The Hewlett Foundation addresses challenges by harnessing society's collective capacity to solve the toughest problems — from the existential threat of climate change to persistent and pervasive inequities, to attacks on democracy itself. As one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the United States, it promotes constructive dialogue across differences and provides reliable, responsive, and strategic support to our partners. Together, the Hewlett Foundation is working to build an inclusive society where people, communities, and the planet flourish.

Timeline of Key Activities Under DAP PHASE II

2021

Inception Phase >>

DEC 2020
GHANA
ELECTIONS

JUNE 2019 -
OCTOBER 2021
DAP PHASE I

DECEMBER 2021 -
APRIL 2022

Inception meetings with target Parliamentary Committees

Needs Assessment - Parliamentary Staff and GSS staff

Development of project management tools and frameworks - MEL Plan with learning map

2022

Implementation Stage >>

MAY

Data analysis and infographic training for Parliamentary staff

JUNE

Training for District Statisticians on understanding, interpreting and analyzing data from MMDAs

JULY

Data Fair 2022

NOVEMBER

Training workshop for Members of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee on how Annual Progress Reports of MMDAs have informed the development and implementation of programs and projects in the Medium-Term Development Plans

>>

2023

DECEMBER

Workshop on how to consider and report on Annual statements by Audit Committees of RCCs and MMDAs

MARCH

Training on the Community Score Card for Members of the Committee on Education - Parliament of Ghana

JULY

Refresher Training on the Community Score Card for the Committee on Education

AUGUST

Training and Engagement Session for Members of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee of the Parliament of Ghana

OCTOBER

Training on the Use of the StatsBank and District Brief Development for Staff of the Research and Committees Department of the Parliament of Ghana

OCTOBER 2023 -
OCTOBER 2024

Development of Eight Constituency Profiles

JANUARY

DAP II Project Team's Reflection and Work Planning Meeting

MARCH

Community Engagement and Assessment of Service Delivery by the Committee on Education of the Parliament of Ghana using the Community Score Card Tool - Begoro, Fanteakwa North District

2024

>>

2025

JUNE

Training on the Use of the StatsBank and Dissemination of Multidimensional Poverty Index Reports for all 261 MMDAs for Members of the Local Government Committee of the Parliament of Ghana

OCTOBER

Sensitization Workshop for Parliamentary Staff towards the Development of a Robust Procedural and Administrative Database in the Parliament of Ghana

DEC 2024
GHANA ELECTIONS

JANUARY

DAP II Project Team and Partners' Meeting (Learning, Review and Workplanning meeting)

MARCH

Excel and Data Visualization Training for Selected Research and Data Management Department Staff of the Parliament of Ghana

APR

Excel and Data Visualization Training for Staff of the Data Management Department of the Parliament of Ghana

Workshop to review the Data Sharing Policy Document for the Parliament of Ghana

MARCH - JUNE

Development of a Data Governance Policy for the Parliament of Ghana

MAY

Launch of Constituency Profiles

JUNE

Training for GSS Staff on Policy Brief Development



Introduction

Phase II of the Data for Accountability Project aimed to improve the Parliament of Ghana's capacity to use statistics to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project was initiated to address ongoing challenges in ensuring the availability, reliability, and accessibility of data, as well as its effective use in monitoring the SDGs. These issues have hindered Parliament's ability to fulfill its oversight and accountability functions, potentially creating gaps that undermine efforts to ensure no one is left behind across the country.

Funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and implemented in two phases from 2019 to 2025, DAP was designed to strengthen the capacity of MPs to use data to inform development planning, budgeting and implementation at both local and national levels, thereby advancing progress toward the SDGs. Situated at an emerging yet important intersection between the evidence-informed policy, parliamentary strengthening and data sectors, DAP stands as the first concerted initiative aimed at integrating data-driven approaches for monitoring the SDGs within the Committees of the Parliament of Ghana, significantly enhancing their capacity to track and evaluate progress. In addition to its impact on data utilization, the project has played a pivotal role in fostering strong, collaborative relationships between the Parliament of Ghana and the Ghana Statistical Service, creating a parliamentary evidence culture.

This report shares key achievements and lessons learned from the second phase of the project, spanning 2021 to 2025. We hope that the valuable insights shared in this report serve as a useful resource for stakeholders working across the evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM), parliamentary strengthening and data sectors.



Why DAP: Opportunities and Entry Points for Change

At the onset of DAP I, three pieces of work were conducted to identify opportunities and challenges affecting Parliament's systematic use of statistics to monitor the SDGs. These were:

- i. a political economy analysis (PEA),
- ii. a needs assessment (drawing on research, programme evaluations and practice-informed knowledge from parliamentary and statistical service staff), and
- iii. a book chapter titled "Parliaments and the national statistics system in Ghana: A critical relationship for evidence use" published in *African Parliaments: Systems of evidence in practice – Vol 2*.¹

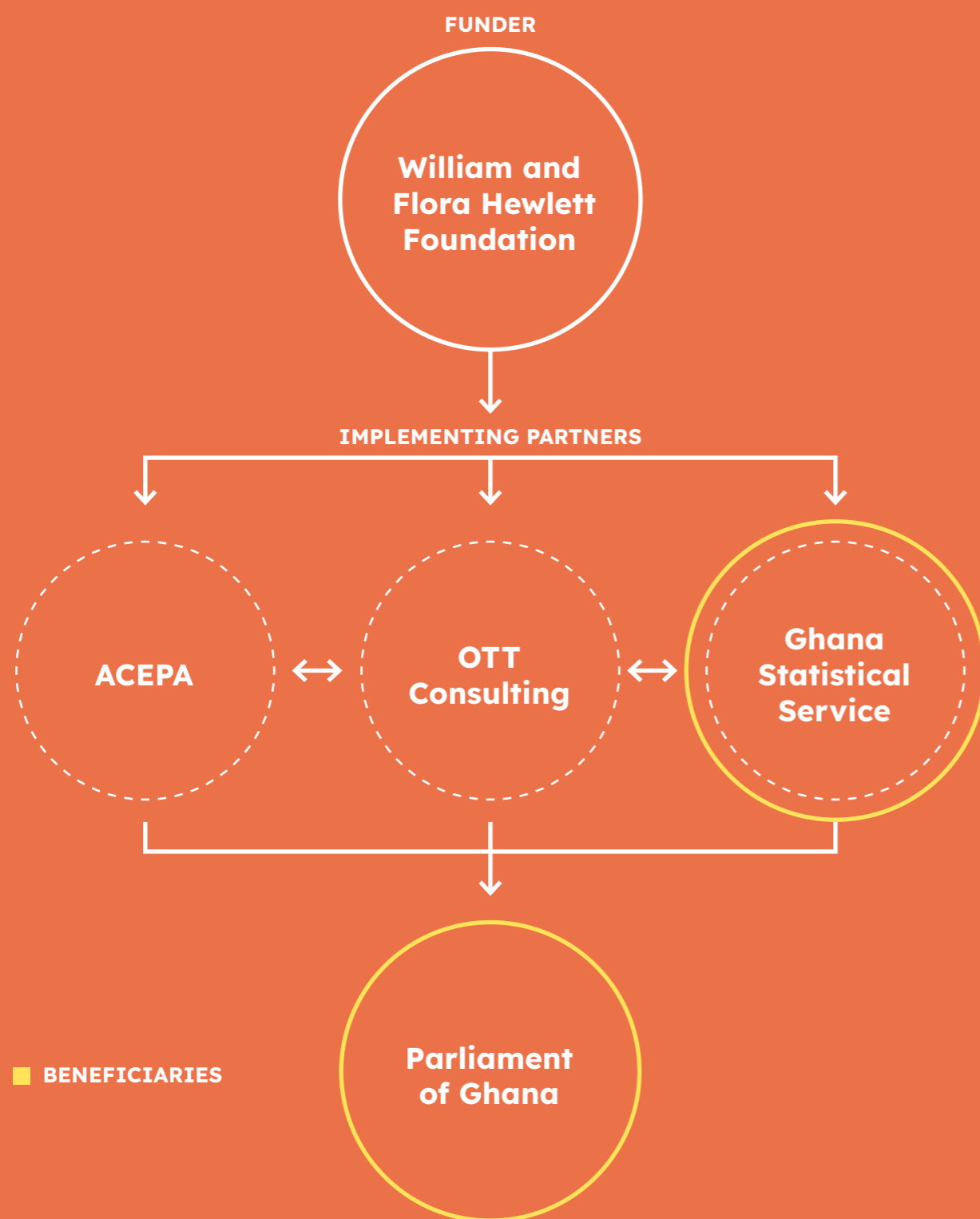
¹ Lampo, I. and Hayter, E., (2022) 'Parliaments and the national statistics system in Ghana: A critical relationship for evidence use' in LS Khumalo, C Blaser Mapitsa, C Morkel, S Masvaure & MK Semela (eds). *African Parliaments Volume 2: Systems of Evidence in Practice*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media .<https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991201539/04>

These foundational pieces of analysis identified a number of gaps and opportunities that DAP could leverage, including:

- i. Previous efforts in the Parliament of Ghana to improve evidence use and persistent capacity gaps related to tracking SDGs, particularly the use of data for oversight.
- ii. Limited participation of Parliament in national SDGs structures, including the High-Level Ministerial Committee, the Implementation Coordinating Committee and a Technical Committee at the national level that provides oversight, coordination and implementation – all structures dominated by the executive.
- iii. Limited collaboration between the Parliament of Ghana and the National Statistics System (NSS).
- iv. Reforms in the NSS heralded by the passage of the Statistical Service Act, 2019 and the GSS role within the national SDGs architecture and at the United Nations (UN) level.
- v. Opportunities to strengthen the Parliament-statistics interface by virtue of SDG 17, which contains specific indicators on the need to strengthen statistical systems (17.18.1; 17.18.2; 17.8.3) and point to the need for strengthened and fully resourced national statistical capacity, as well as the necessary enabling legislation.
- vi. The leadership role played by Ghana in relation to the SDGs – former President Nana Akufo-Addo has served two terms as the co-chair of the Eminent Group of Advocates for the SDGs.

These issues not only informed project implementation in DAP I, where project activities were designed to address them, but also remained relevant going into DAP II. The 2020 general election in Ghana, which happened one and a half years into DAP I, presented new dynamics that the project needed to study and adapt to, especially as the project transitioned into the second phase. This required another PEA – an update on the analysis done at the beginning of DAP I. Key issues identified in the DAP II PEA – with a focus on stakeholders and operating context – are discussed below.

DAP Stakeholders



Parliament

The analysis of the Parliament of Ghana and its place within the country's political context is relevant to understanding how these dynamics act as incentives and disincentives to the adoption of inclusive development policies informed by the use of data by MPs, and the parliament as a whole.

The hybrid system practised in the Parliament of Ghana, where, due to constitutional arrangements, the majority of ministers of state must be appointed from among MPs, creates a dominant executive arm of government and a president with vast powers. This presents fundamental structural problems in the institutional arrangements for the independence and effectiveness of Parliament, particularly when it comes to oversight over the executive.

Notwithstanding these structural constraints, it is still possible for Parliament to make significant progress by asserting itself in areas where its mandate is unambiguous, for instance, by scrutinizing and investigating executive actions through sectoral and special committees, as well as its role within the budget process (albeit limited).

Against this background, DAP courted the support and buy-in of key actors within institutions, such as the Leadership of Parliament and target committees, departmental heads and committee clerks, to ensure smooth project implementation. Formal and informal engagements with these actors were key in sustaining interest in the project and the commitment of MPs and staff to project activities.

DAP also identified and leveraged the new cluster system introduced within the Committees Division in Parliament to work with more clerks in providing timely data and information support to MPs and committees. The cluster system groups committees along thematic lines (for example, finance and economy, social, etc.) and is managed by a group of clerks, as opposed to the previous practice of having two clerks per committee.

Ghana Statistical Service

GSS remained a key partner for the project, serving a dual role of implementer and beneficiary. Building on the successes from DAP I, which focused on enhancing the capacities of statisticians and collaboration with data users, DAP II expanded its scope to include District Statisticians as project beneficiaries. This ensured that the project's aim of facilitating interaction between data producers and MPs went beyond the national level to the district/constituency levels. GSS played a crucial role in convening and coordinating the work with District Statisticians.

Other Data Producers

Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the media to improve monitoring of Parliament, with particular focus on key indicators outlined in the project Theory of Change (ToC), remained critical for DAP II. Greater collaboration with CSOs, media and state agencies actively involved in Ghana's implementation of the SDGs was identified at the start of DAP as vital for the project's success. Over the implementation period, DAP was able to engage and collaborate with organizations such as the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD), the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), and the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, among others. These engagements provided opportunities to share and learn from other actors, as well as build relationships that contribute to the uptake of evidence by decision-makers.



Operating Context

Ghana has been implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 since their adoption in 2015. The two agendas have been integrated into national planning and budgeting processes. Medium-term development plans at the national and sub-national levels have included programmes and projects aligned to the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The integration of the two agendas in the planning and budgeting processes is backed by an implementation arrangement that promotes cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels.

Parliaments, an arm of government with the unique mandate of representing the interests of citizens, making laws and budgets, as well as holding the executive branch to account, are identified as a key stakeholder in the implementation of the SDGs at country level. The UN and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) recognize the important accountability role of parliaments, calling for the close involvement of national parliaments during all stages of the SDGs, including on high-level national bodies that coordinate and guide implementation; through parliamentary reviews and approval of national SDG plans; and parliamentary participation and support in regular national review processes.²

For the Parliament of Ghana to be effective in ensuring accountability in the implementation of the SDGs, its work across lawmaking, representation and oversight must be anchored in the use of various forms of evidence, particularly statistical data. An evidence-informed approach to overseeing the implementation of the SDGs means that MPs have access to all the necessary evidence, particularly statistical data, and can understand and use it routinely. It calls for capacity not only at the individual level but also at the institutional level, where the structures and mechanisms (especially technical expertise from the Parliamentary Service) are in place to support the work of MPs, facilitating the use of high-quality, independent statistics and other forms of evidence for decision-making.

Effective oversight of the SDGs by the Parliament of Ghana also calls for building partnerships and networks across research, evidence and data systems locally and beyond.

The robust and multifaceted data capacity required by Parliament to assert itself in implementing the SDGs justifies a project like the DAP.

The 2020 and 2024 General Elections

The 2020 election produced a hung parliament with the two main political parties in Parliament, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), having an equal number of parliamentary seats, 137 (NPP) and 137 (NDC), with one independent candidate, who chose to do business with the NPP side. This meant business in the House would require consensus-building. Bills laid before Parliament would now be subjected to rigorous scrutiny and debate before they could be passed into law, and oversight committees would be

more inclined to thoroughly scrutinize implementation reports of sector ministries. MPs would require timely and reliable data to do their job. DAP leveraged this unique opportunity by making relevant data available to MPs in a timely manner.

The hung parliament also meant the constant presence of MPs was required in the Chamber for crucial votes, and this had implications for the participation of MPs in DAP activities.

The impact of the electioneering campaigns leading up to the 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections on the project was foreseen at the start of DAP II. Consequently, the project planned very few engagements targeting MPs in 2024 and also ensured that these engagements did not go beyond June of that year.

Introduction of Private Member's Bills

The 7th Parliament (2017-2020) under the leadership of the Rt. Hon. Aaron Mike Oquaye saw the introduction of the Private Member's Bill in the Parliament of Ghana. This paved the way for individual MPs to initiate legislation outside of the executive. The practice continued in the 8th Parliament (2021-2024) and provided an incentive for MPs to seek out evidence and data to form the basis for policy proposals they intended to bring to the House through the Private Member's Bill mechanism. This contributed to a favourable context for DAP to operate in.

COVID-19 and its Impact

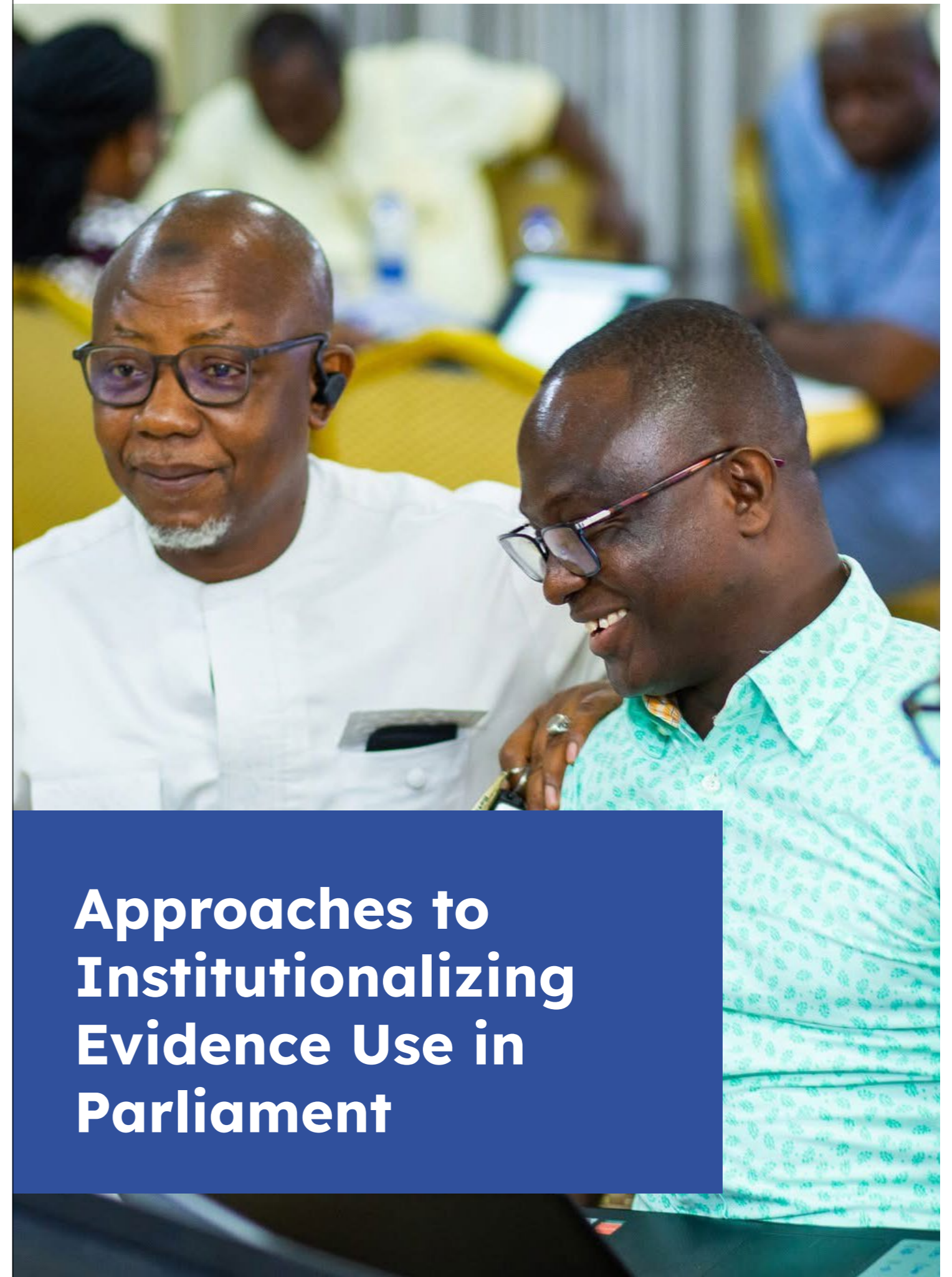
The COVID-19 pandemic was a force majeure that impacted project implementation during the first phase. Not only did it affect the timely roll-out of project activities, but it also changed the way things were done, including how Parliament itself conducted business, such as the move to virtual or a combination of virtual and physical meetings and a heavy reliance on Information Communication Technology. When DAP II began, the severity of the pandemic had declined, and societies had reopened, but the virus was still present, and the possibility of infections from new variants remained. Project activities and engagements in the early days of DAP II were therefore conducted with utmost adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols, ensuring that project participants and stakeholders were not exposed to any health risks. The impact of COVID-19 lessened over the course of the second phase of the project.

² IPU and UNDP (2016). *Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit* <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/toolkits/2017-01/parliaments-and-sustainable-development-goals-self-assessment-toolkit>

How DAP Leveraged Opportunities

An appreciation of the political economy context within which DAP II was operating (as highlighted in the section above) helped the project to identify some enabling factors which were harnessed for effective implementation. These enabling factors included:

- i. The fact that the same group of MPs were available throughout phase II (i.e., the duration of the 8th Parliament), which made it easier to consolidate gains and track results.
- ii. The current parliamentary arrangement, where a group of clerks are assigned to committee clusters, enabled DAP to reach more clerks through project activities.
- iii. A dynamic and experienced Speaker of the 8th Parliament of Ghana, who appreciated the need for evidence-informed decision-making. This ensured that DAP had high-level buy-in throughout the project and was instrumental in sustaining the relationship the project fostered between Parliament and GSS.
- iv. The opportunity to work with a young crop of professionals and contribute to building their careers. The Research Department of the Parliament of Ghana saw an expansion in staff numbers at the start of the 8th Parliament. Several of these officers were key beneficiaries of a series of capacity-building activities implemented under the project.



Approaches to Institutionalizing Evidence Use in Parliament

DAP Theory of Change

LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Improved Parliamentary capacity to use statistics to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana

Learning and engagement with statistics and parliamentary strengthening sectors contributes to growth of African EIPM field in research and practice

OUTCOMES

1

Strengthened oversight & representation capacity of MPs

2

Strengthened capacity of Parliamentary staff to support evidence use by MPs

3

Improved capacity of GSS & parliamentary staff in the compilation of local level data for better rep. by MPs

4

Improved collaboration between data producers & Parliament

5

Learning shared with EIPM, data & parliamentary strengthening sectors

OUTPUTS

Committees' appreciation of value & contribution of data to decision-making strengthened
Committees' capacity to undertake monitoring & track SDGs progress strengthened

Constituency profiles & accompanying procedures/ guidelines developed

Parliamentary staff are able to source relevant data & produce usable policy knowledge products for MPs

GSS (dist .reg statisticians) & Parliamentary staff skills to produce constituency/ district profiles strengthened
Mechanisms established in selected districts to harmonize data collection for improved access & use by MPs

Mechanisms for systematic collaboration between GSS & Parliament established

Mechanisms for systematic collaboration with other data producers established

Priority stakeholders within & outside Parliament are aware of & supportive of the project

Evidence and our experience

Project benefits from insights from other contexts/ projects and shares its learning with others in the sector

ACTIVITY STREAMS

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT
FIELD VISITS

TRAINING

- MPs & data champions
- Parliamentary staff
- GSS staff

MENTORING/ COACHING
Parliamentary & GSS staff

DATA FAIR

SDGs DESK

CONSTITUENCY PROFILES

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

- Webinars
- Briefings
- Interviews
- Publications & blogs
- Social media & websites
- Invitations to events etc.

Choice of activities informed by our project learning (internal) and responsiveness to the

dynamic political context (external), informed by regular reflection & reviews

Key assumptions for how activities will lead to outputs and outcomes

- There is motivation and commitment within Parliament to monitor progress towards the SDGs
- There will be motivation from the committees to work with us and this will be sustained over the life of the project
- There is no direct overlap with other projects
- Data required for effective parliamentary modelling of the SDGs is available
- There is motivation and commitment from at least five MPs to undertake a constituency profiling
- External data producers are interested in collaborating with Parliament
- COVID-19 will not have a significant negative impact on project activities

The project adopted a number of approaches for working towards the attainment of its overall goals of:

- i. improved parliamentary capacity to use statistics to monitor progress towards the SDGs³ and
- ii. learning and engagement with statistics and parliamentary strengthening sectors to contribute to the growth of the African EIPM field in research and practice.⁴

Building on the achievements and lessons from the first phase, the DAP II ToC envisioned changes at three main levels of capacity and in the different types of evidence used within these.

The first is the individual level, which targets evidence use by MPs, parliamentary staff, and GSS staff, and focuses on strengthening knowledge, skills, and awareness around evidence. The second level targets evidence use in organizational structures and systems within Parliament and GSS, with a focus on improvements in structures as well as processes for the compilation and presentation of data. The third level is the 'evidence systems' level, which targets changes in relationships between Parliament and GSS as well as other data producers, with a focus on building mechanisms for systemic collaboration.

Approaches to realizing these changes included:

- i. Training, mentoring and coaching of MPs, parliamentary staff, GSS staff and district statisticians.
- ii. Developing constituency-specific data profiles to support MPs to better understand and monitor the status of the SDGs in their communities and represent constituents' needs.
- iii. Enhancing the working of the SDGs desk within the Parliamentary Research Department to support committees to track and report on SDGs.
- iv. Instituting a Data Fair to enable producers of data, including GSS, to highlight the availability of important data to users in Parliament.
- v. Field monitoring of SDGs at the local level by Committees to ensure oversight is not limited to the national level.
- vi. Sharing of learning within Parliament and with external stakeholders.

The next chapter discusses progress on outcomes linked to DAP's main areas of work.

³ Linked to the Hewlett Foundations goal of "Strengthening systems: contribute to improvements in policy processes, systems, capacities and incentives that enable ongoing use of evidence in policymaking".

⁴ Linked to the Hewlett Foundation's goal of "Contributing to the field - fortify the emerging field of evidence-informed policymaking in Africa."

Pathways to Improving Capacity to Use Statistics to Monitor the Sustainable Development Goals



As noted in the previous chapter, DAP pursued two ultimate goals: to improve parliamentary capacity to use data to monitor progress toward the SDGs and to contribute to the growth of the African EIPM field in research and practice. To achieve this, DAP worked through five pathways:

1 Strengthening oversight and representation capacity of MPs.

2 Strengthening capacity of parliamentary staff to support evidence use by MPs.

3 Improving the capacity of GSS & parliamentary staff to compile local-level data for MPs.

4 Improving collaboration between data producers & Parliament.

5 Sharing learning with EIPM, data and parliamentary strengthening sectors.

The following sections share insights on DAP's work and achievements in these outcome areas.

PATHWAY 1 Strengthening Oversight and Representation Capacity of MPs

DAP targeted and worked mainly with members of three committees in the Parliament of Ghana, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee,⁵ the Education Committee and the Local Government and Rural Development Committee. Over the project period, DAP enhanced the capacity of committee members in various areas through training, coaching, workshops and practical field visits.

Project interventions in this area sought to enhance the understanding and knowledge of MPs, as well as equip them with skills around data use in the following areas:

- > Annual Progress Reports⁶ (APRs) as tools for oversight and accountability – and how data-driven APRs can be used to inform the preparation and monitoring of medium-term plans, annual work programmes and budgets at the local level.
- > Review and scrutiny of Audit Committee Reports of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and Regional Coordinating Councils.
- > Oversight tools such as the Community Score Card – understanding the theory and application of the tool through field oversight of education services (linked to SDG 4).
- > Using the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index as a data source for prioritization and inclusion during district planning processes and oversight.
- > Accessing and using the StatsBank – a data hub developed by GSS, which provides an opportunity to easily access different kinds of data, including

those on microeconomic indicators and population census (covering nine thematic areas) in a faster manner.

- > Development and dissemination of data products – such as Constituency Profiles, MPI reports, and education sector reports.
- > Data Fairs to highlight the availability of data, drive interest in data use and foster collaboration between data producers and Parliament.
- > Development of tools and guides – to serve as reference materials for MPs and staff. The guides developed include instructions on reviewing Annual Audit Committee Reports of MMDAs, a StatsBank User Guide, and Guidelines on Developing Constituency Profiles.

Cumulatively, over 100 MPs benefited directly from these initiatives.

“Before the DAP initiative, there was a lot of guesswork in our discussions. People would make claims or assertions, but we had no reliable data to fact-check or support those claims. Now, with the DAP initiative, MPs are encouraged to ground their comments in facts. This has helped us to critically examine the basis of our analysis, ensuring that we are not just making speculative comments. If our analysis is weak, it's important to recognize it and correct it.”

HON. SULEMAN SANID,
MP for Ahafo Ano North (8th Parliament)

⁵ The Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee no longer exists as a Committee in the Parliament of Ghana starting from the 9th Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana. The 9th Parliament was sworn in on 7th January 2025.

⁶ APRs are progress reports on the implementation of the Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework and corresponding District Medium Term Development Plans.

PATHWAY 2

Strengthening the Capacity of Parliamentary Staff

DAP mostly worked with staff from the research and committee departments, and occasionally with the Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group (IDRIG). The project's support for staff has focused on enhancing their capacity to support the use of evidence by MPs. The project did this through training that equipped parliamentary staff with skills in analyzing different kinds of data and presenting them in user-friendly formats for MPs, and how to access, analyse and use data from the StatsBank and other data sources to generate evidence products for MPs. The project also supported the Data Management Department in its efforts to develop a procedural and administrative database in the Parliament of Ghana. Over 120 staff have been impacted directly by DAP interventions.

"The training has actually exposed us to data sources which we have been lacking over the years. The training has also been able to let us know where we can actually pull-out data for our work because as we are aware, research officers need to be proficient in data and without data we would not be able to do that. In the past we have always been suffering because we do not have access to data sources."

MR. FRANK BITAFIR IJON,
Research Department, Parliament of Ghana

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN BUILDING CAPACITIES IN PARLIAMENT UNDER PATHWAYS 1 AND 2

> Strengthened the capacity of MPs to use data and evidence for oversight and representation.

The project successfully ensured that MPs' appreciation of the value and contribution of data to decision-making was strengthened. This manifests through MPs' demonstrable interest in and demand for local-level data, such as district-level MPI reports, constituency profiles, sector reports and other data products that shed light on progress on development at the district level. At the time of DAP's first engagement with target Committees on district-level MPI reports, the MPI survey covered just 30 (as a pilot) out of 261 districts in the country. Demand and interest from MPs for the MPI to be conducted in their respective districts led the GSS to generate MPI factsheets and reports for all 261 districts.

"The workshop has opened our eyes to what we can use the data and the statistics that have been taken from the various constituencies and regions for. This workshop is very important because it helps in planning. If you have the data of your constituency, it helps you to know where is lacking so that you can provide or help to mitigate some of the problems of your constituency. It also helps you to have forehand information about the group of people that you have. If you have the data or statistics of your constituency, you know the number of youth, the number of widows and the number of males and females, so that you will be able to plan ahead."

HON. LYDIA LAMISI AKANVARIBA,
MP for Tempene and Member,
Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee
(8th Parliament)

MPs on the Local Government and Rural Development Committee have been supportive of GSS efforts to get district assemblies to complete data input into the MMDA Administrative Data template, a GSS initiative to improve upon the collection and storage of administrative data at the local level. Districts appearing before the Committee as part of public hearings conducted on Audit Committee reports were required to provide a status update on this initiative; a further testament to the value MPs are beginning to place on data. Anecdotal evidence shows that MPs are using data in their work, especially when it comes to responding to the needs of constituents. The MP for Tempene in the Upper East Region of Ghana, for instance, shared her experience on how she instituted a "tricycle ambulance scheme" in her constituency after data showed that there was a high incidence of maternal mortality in her area due to the fact that women in labour lose their lives because they get to health facilities too late to be helped.

MPs have strengthened their capacity to undertake monitoring and tracking of the SDGs as a result of DAP training on reviewing Annual Progress Reports and Audit Committee reports, and how data and other forms of evidence from such exercises can be used to influence parliamentary oversight. MPs' ability to effectively scrutinize annual progress reports and audit reports from districts is an important oversight activity or mechanism that leads to improvements in planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting at the local level. Effective planning and execution at the local level contribute significantly to progress toward the attainment of the SDGs.

The deployment of a social accountability tool - the Community Score Card - by MPs to monitor service delivery in the education sector, facilitated by DAP, not only served to monitor progress towards SDG 4 but was also a mechanism to collect and use citizens' evidence and local-level data in oversight. Through a series of facilitated dialogues among MPs, local government officials, staff of the Ghana Education Service, teachers, parents, pupils, community leaders and other stakeholders at the community level, the Community Score Card provided a critical feedback loop between decision-makers at the national level and service providers and service beneficiaries at the local level.

"For me, out of the GES [Ghana Education Service] presentation and the children, I realised that all their 60 primary schools have Kindergarten attached to them, but my constituency, Kintampo North, I don't have KGs attached to all primary schools, so I told my Municipal Director of Education to get me the figure. So, you see the importance of this project, it is making me draw attention to my constituency."

HON. JOSEPH KUMAH,
MP, Kintampo North Constituency
and Member, Committee on Education

Data products disseminated to MPs by DAP during the 2023 budget sessions, such as the report on special needs education, seem to have informed the budget debates and appropriations. There were calls from both the Majority and Minority sides in Parliament for an increase in the allocation to special needs schools.⁷ We have also seen examples of MPI data use by MPs where, for instance, an MP serving as a panellist on a popular news analysis programme on TV/Radio in January 2024, cited MPI data from GSS to support his point on prevailing economic conditions in the country and the impact on citizens, particularly his constituents.⁸

> Strengthened capacity of Parliamentary staff to support evidence use by MPs.

Parliamentary staff who have been part of the project have enhanced their capabilities around sourcing relevant data and producing usable evidence products for MPs. The series of training and practical sessions on using the StatsBank, data analysis, infographics, and policy briefs has led to improved knowledge, skills and confidence levels among the staff. DAP has been instrumental in building the skills of a young crop of Research Officers who were newly employed in the department throughout the project.

⁷ Adu-Owusu, P. (2023). *2024 Budget: Majority, Minority Leaders push for an increase in amount allocated to special needs schools.* MyJoyOnline. <https://www.myjoyonline.com/2024-budget-majority-minority-leaders-push-for-an-increase-in-amount-allocated-to-special-needs-schools/>

⁸ *Newsfile with Samson Lardy Anyenini.* JoyNews (from the 2:15:00 to 2:18:31 minute mark) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xLWa4wSXjs>

“We’ve been taken through a series of activities and I have learnt a lot, such as when you have data and how to extract the needed information from it. We used tools like Vlookup and Countif. I have learnt a lot, given that I am now learning how to extract data and how to manoeuvre my way through a database, and this is really a good thing.”

JULIANA KESEWA ANSONG,
Assist. Research Officer, Parliament

The recent creation of a Data Management Department in the Parliament of Ghana reinforces the institutional commitment to evidence use.

The seed for the Department was sown during DAP I through the SDGs/Statistics Desk initiative. The Clerk to Parliament at the time leveraged the establishment of the desk to establish a Data Centre with a broader scope and mandate to serve the needs of MPs. By the start of DAP II, Parliament had allocated physical space to accommodate the Data Centre. Subsequently, a Data Management Department has been created (as part of reforms within the Parliamentary Service) with a mandate to design, maintain up-to-date administrative and public policy databases and distil actionable knowledge from data for the effective functioning of Parliament; and to strengthen data-driven legislative work of Parliament. The establishment of this new department reflects Parliament’s desire to change the way data and evidence feed into decision-making in the House and is an affirmation of the recognition of the value that evidence and data bring to the work of Parliament.

DAP has provided significant support to the Data Management Department since its establishment, ensuring institutional frameworks are in place to guide its work and that key personnel (albeit few) have the skills to deliver on their mandate. DAP also supported the formulation of a Data Sharing Policy and a Data Governance Policy for the Parliament of Ghana. The project provided tailor-made training for staff in the Department in areas relevant to their work. DAP also supported the initial efforts by the Department to develop a robust procedural and administrative database.

PATHWAY 3 Strengthening Capacity in the Statistics System

GSS’s participation in DAP has been as an implementer and a beneficiary. The project has served as a vehicle for GSS to provide technical expertise and share their vast experience on data and the SDGs with MPs, parliamentary staff and Parliament as an institution; and for supporting ongoing efforts to address challenges in the NSS, especially those related to producing data and statistics that can be used by stakeholders like parliamentarians.

While DAP I worked extensively with statisticians from GSS, the focus of DAP II has been on District Statisticians who are administratively employed and managed by the Local Government Service under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Though not directly under GSS, the work and mandate of District Statisticians are similar and connected to the work of GSS, which has the mandate to provide them with technical backstopping. Thus, it was necessary to leverage DAP and other windows of opportunity to adequately resource the District Statisticians, enabling them to effectively perform their roles in coordinating administrative data and other forms of data at the local level.

Capacity-building activities to equip district statisticians with skills to collect, analyse and synthesize local-level data to feed products such as the constituency profile and annual reports of district assemblies, as well as using the ‘Administrative Data Template’, developed by GSS, were carried out. GSS staff also benefited from activities that enhanced their skills in using social accountability tools as a mechanism for collecting citizens’ data.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER PATHWAY 3

> Improved capacity in the compilation of local-level data for better representation

DAP has contributed to improving the capacity of GSS staff and District Statisticians to collect local-level data through training and the introduction of new systems and tools such as the administrative data template. Engagement with the project has led District Statisticians to develop a better appreciation and understanding of how Parliament works, the data needs of MPs, and the linkages between the local level and the central government. GSS has been able to scale up DAP’s training for sections of district statisticians to training all district statisticians across the country.

“I was expecting to learn how to collect quality data. I have already done something on administrative data before, but how to check the quality of the data was the issue. Through this workshop, I’ve learnt how to check for data quality, what an outlier is and whether the data needs to be checked or not. I have also learnt how to write a report on the data collected.”

IBRAHIM ISSAH BUKARI,
Municipal Statistician, West Gonja

DAP enabled evidence to be accessible and user-friendly. The ‘administrative data template’ has facilitated the easy and quick compilation of local-level administrative data by District Statisticians to support decision-making at all levels. This means that data is now available for use by all stakeholders at the district level.

The project harnessed or leveraged district-level administrative data to develop profiles for eight constituencies. The process for developing this set of profiles was faster compared to the first round of profiles developed under DAP I. The eight profiles were on: Accra Metropolitan Assembly⁹, Efigya-Sekyer East constituency, Fanteakwa North constituency, Ketu South constituency, Tano South constituency, Akatsi North constituency, Amansie Central constituency, and Talensi constituency.

The profiles have generated considerable interest among stakeholders, particularly from the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs. The Minister responsible for the sector committed, during the launch of the profiles, to strengthening the capacity of MMDAs to collect, manage and use data for planning and budgeting.

DAP also contributed to enhancing the skills of GSS staff in turning statistical data produced by the institution into actionable policy briefs through training, coaching and manuals to support continuous learning.

PATHWAY 4 Supporting Engagement between Parliament and GSS

The Ghana Statistical Service Act 2019 (ACT 1003) was passed at the onset of the first phase of DAP. Although the Parliament of Ghana played a crucial role in passing the law, there was minimal to no collaboration between Parliament and GSS. The Act presented a window of opportunity to enhance collaboration between the two entities over the course of DAP I, as well as strengthen the interaction between Parliament and other data institutions that produce data and evidence, such as think tanks, academic research institutions and some state agencies.

DAP II worked to consolidate the relationship between Parliament and GSS, and to open Parliament up to other data producers.

As part of efforts to showcase the availability of data and increase/institutionalize collaboration between data producers and users, DAP’s key intervention in this area has been the flagship Data Fair. The Fair, organized through a collaboration between DAP partners and IDRIG, brought together both public and private sector actors working within the data and evidence ecosystem to showcase their work and promote the various sources of data/information and evidence available to MPs.

Opportunities were also created for MPs to participate in events organized by GSS around data and statistics, such as hackathons and African Statistics Day commemorations, among others.

⁹ This covers Ododiodio, Ablekuma South, and Okaikwei South constituencies

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER PATHWAY 4

Improved and sustained collaboration between Parliament and data producers. DAP has successfully established mechanisms for systemic collaboration between Parliament, GSS and other data producers. Project activities, engagements, and trainings have served as means for continuous engagement and cooperation between Parliament and GSS. Learning from DAP has influenced GSS to start developing its own programmes that target Committee Clerks and Research Assistants of MPs. DAP has influenced the scope and content of these programmes.

“The flexibility of the DAP project allowed us to adapt our activities around the electoral cycle, ensuring that we remained focused on our goals without getting caught up in the politics of the moment.”

**OMAR SEIDU, DIRECTOR,
Social Statistics and SDGs Coordinator
at the Ghana Statistical Service**

Constituency Profiles also serve as another mechanism of supporting continuous engagement and collaboration between Parliament and GSS. The interest of the Data Management Department in producing profiles is an exercise that requires close cooperation with and support from GSS.

The Data Fairs organized by the project, apart from increasing awareness of the existence of data from various sources and visibility of the work of GSS and other data producers, also led to MPs making connections with a variety of data producers. MPs have reached out directly for technical support on accessing and utilizing data from GSS portals, and teams are available to provide the necessary support. The research team of the MP for the Korle Klottey constituency, for instance, has been trained on how to use data from the StatsBank to formulate policies and developmental agenda, upon request.

“I am really excited about the amount of information that is available. You know sometimes as a Member of Parliament, finding a good research assistant to support you in finding the information that you need to whether to ask the right questions, make the right statement or even just to be better informed...can be a bit difficult; because as a Member of Parliament, you're having to juggle between a lot of responsibilities and your ability to do in depth research can be compromised just by the fact that you're having to wear so many hats. Having access to such information, the resources available, and the personnel who are so eager to help really is encouraging, and it makes a difference because it means that you have the support in place to support your role as a member of parliament, and honestly, one couldn't ask for more.”

**HON. ZANETOR AGYEMAN-RAWLINGS MP,
Korle Klottey Constituency**

DAP has raised awareness of the importance of data at the highest levels of decision-making in Parliament and the vital role GSS plays in making data available. This is evidenced by the notable fact that the Government Statistician has received subsequent invitations to brief Parliament in its Chamber, after the first invitation in 2021 during DAP I. Before DAP brokered a relationship between Parliament and GSS, the Government Statistician had never addressed Parliament. It is therefore significant that in March 2025, in the first session of the 9th Parliament of Ghana, the Government Statistician was invited to brief the Committee of the Whole, followed by a subsequent engagement with the Committee on Economy and Development in June 2025. We believe this is a practice that will continue.

PATHWAY 5

Contribution to the Evidence-Informed Policymaking Field

An important goal of DAP has been to advance evidence use in Parliament, particularly in monitoring the SDGs through interconnections with data producers such as GSS and improving systemic factors that enhance the use of data production, learning that contributes to the growth of the EIPM field in Africa and beyond. In contributing to field building, DAP's strategies and approaches sought to ensure that: i) priority stakeholders within and outside Parliament are aware of and supportive of the project, and ii) the project benefits from insights from other contexts and projects and shares its learning with others in the sector.

To this end, the project received significant support and recognition from various actors from the Parliament of Ghana, including its leadership, as well as civil society organizations working within the governance sector in the country. Targeting a global audience for the dissemination of learning products and sector engagements has also won the project recognition beyond Ghana. Sector convenings, such as conferences, have been leveraged to share learning and also learn from other actors in the EIPM, parliamentary and statistics space. Highlights of key engagements and learning outputs are presented below.

Collaboration at the top management level of GSS and Parliament also increased during the project period. The Chief Director of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs served as a member of the governing board of GSS, an acknowledgement of Parliament's value as a statistical user and potential to contribute to improvements in the NSS.

DAP created a demand for evidence, particularly statistical data. MPs and staff can now reach out to GSS for information and data support. Similarly, it has become easy for GSS staff to reach out and access information from Parliament. GSS has designated focal persons responsible for responding to requests from MPs and staff, and it also provides technical support to the Data Management Department in its bid to put in place tools and mechanisms that will aid effective and efficient documentation, organization, storage and management of administrative and procedural data produced throughout Parliament. GSS support has also been provided by recommending staff of the department for training in Denmark – a recommendation based on previous engagements with staff under DAP.

DAP committees have demonstrated openness to engaging other agencies and institutions that have data and evidence relevant to their work, such as the NDPC and district assembly officials.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER PATHWAY 5

> Relevant Sector Engagements

DAP was showcased and learning from the project was shared at the following events:

2022 >>

FEBRUARY

National Multi-stakeholder Evidence Forum

Organized by CDD-Ghana under the Evidence for Development Project. Learnings shared from DAP were on strengthening legislative oversight through evidence-informed decision-making practices.

MARCH

UN Statistical Commission

Presentation by GSS with a focus on its work towards strengthening the data ecosystem in Ghana and how DAP has contributed to that.

JUNE

Development Impact Summit

Organized by the Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) under the Development Impact West Africa (DIWA) project. Shared learning as part of a panel on Inclusion in Global Development Research, focusing on how DAP has been supporting evidence (including research) uptake by parliamentarians.

2025 >>

FEBRUARY

Webinar on Governance for Evidence-Informed Policymaking

Webinar organized by the Global Coalition for Evidence from the World Health Organization. It explored Governance models for EIPM with a focus on the context of legislative branches. DAP was featured as one of two country case studies.

FEBRUARY

Evidence for Development Project: Multi-stakeholder peer-to-peer learning forum

This event was organised by CDD-Ghana, bringing together actors within the evidence ecosystem in Ghana to exchange knowledge and best practices on the tools, approaches, and lessons in supporting evidence use in government to improve governance and better social development outcomes at the national and sub-national level.

FEBRUARY

Office of National Statistics, UK, Engagement with the Parliament of Ghana

Representatives from the DAP project team from ACEPA and GSS accompanied the Office of National Statistics, UK and the British High Commission, Ghana, during a visit to the office of the Clerk of Parliament of Ghana to discuss how members of Parliament can access and use data as part of their legislative and oversight responsibilities. This is in recognition of DAP's efforts over the years to enhance evidence use in the Parliament of Ghana and foster collaboration between Parliament and GSS.

2023

JUNE

OTT Conference

DAP partners hosted a session (together with other actors in the EIPM space) titled **“Working politically: evidence users in times of uncertainty”**. The session focused on the practical experiences and needs of evidence users in times of political uncertainty, drawing on experience in all branches of government in Africa, Latin America/Caribbean, and the United Kingdom. It explored how uncertainty changes what evidence is needed by users, how they use it and how they navigate periods of instability. It also reflected on the role of evidence brokers in supporting evidence use at such times, and proffered advice and recommendations for think tanks/CSOs.

>>

MARCH

Roundtable on Data-driven Policymaking in Ghana

The Roundtable was hosted by the British High Commission in Ghana. The Government Statistician and the Executive Director took part in the event. The Government Statistician serving as a panellist underscored the need for a structured relationship between Parliament and GSS, and highlighted some of the initiatives under DAP, such as the constituency profiling.

2024

JUNE

OTT Conference

A DAP project team member was part of a panel titled **“2024: A Year of Elections - The Role of Think Tanks.”** The panel explored the role of think tanks before, during, and after elections; a timely conversation, as a number of countries go to the polls that year. Having gone through one election cycle and preparing to go through another in December 2024, DAP was uniquely placed to share insights with conference participants from around the globe.

NOVEMBER

Transforming Evidence Network Conference

Drawing on the publication *African Parliaments Vol. 1 & 2: Evidence Systems for Governance and Development*, in which DAP contributed a chapter to a panel on **“Knowledge Brokering at the crossroads between evidence and legislation”**, the session explored the significance and role of Parliaments towards ensuring EIPM contributes to transformation and equitable development. One of the authors of the chapter was on the panel to share perspectives based on the project experience.

JUNE

OTT Conference

DAP project team members participated in the conference, where they shared experiences and lessons from the project in various breakout sessions.

Knowledge and Learning Products Produced

1. Learning piece on *Data Use in Parliament* - shares seven tips on what GSS has learned about communicating data to parliamentary audiences, including understanding stakeholders, making advice practical and actionable, and ensuring comms are simple, clear and engaging.
2. Learning piece on *Parliament and GSS: a growing relationship for evidence use in Ghana* - explores the relationship between GSS and Parliament, drawing on interviews with GSS and parliamentary staff as well as project documents, it outlines the key characteristics of this relationship, both formal and informal.
3. Think piece on *Strengthening Parliaments for SDG implementation* - highlights some of the main characteristics and challenges of strengthening the interface between Parliament, the statistical system and the SDGs in Ghana.
4. *Podcast* on supporting evidence use in the Parliament of Ghana - insights from Dr. Abraham Ibn Zackaria, Deputy Director of Research in the Parliament of Ghana, shedding light on how evidence is used in Ghanaian policymaking.
5. *Blog post* - shares highlights, achievements and challenges in 2023 from ACEPA, GSS, and OTT, including access to the StatsBank, the increased use of local-level data and training.
6. Case study on *Navigating Electoral Transitions in Ghana* - reflects how DAP has engaged with and responded to critical elements of Ghana's governance and political economy context during its implementation period.
7. Featured in an article published by the UN Statistics Division in the Statistical Journal of the IAOS on *Collaboration between national statistical offices and academia: Benefits, conditions, areas of collaboration and practical level experience in countries*. It discusses the benefits and conditions for effective collaboration and highlights the different areas where NSOs and academia could collaborate. The country experience from Ghana showcases DAP's Data Fair as an example of an effective collaboration that contributes to shifting decision-making from perception-based to data-driven.
8. Case study on *Institutionalizing Evidence Use in Ghana's Parliament* - explores the significant achievements of the DAP project and how it facilitated an evidence-driven approach to policy, particularly during and post-COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 elections, by leveraging non-traditional data sources and strengthening parliamentary engagement.
9. Case study on *Building an Evidence-Use Culture within Ghana's Parliament* - reflects on the experiences of one MP who actively engaged with DAP, highlighting how it has influenced the understanding of data, its application in parliamentary debates, and its potential for improving policy outcomes, and reflects more broadly on the impact of DAP in Ghana's Parliament and examines how data-driven policymaking has helped shift the approach to critical governance issues.
10. Case study on *Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Use Evidence on Ghana's Parliament Research Department* - explores how DAP worked to improve the Research Department's capability to integrate evidence into parliamentary processes.



Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges and Mitigations

Implementation of DAP and all its accomplishments have not been without challenges. Some of these were predictable and perennial based on the context and the political economy environment within which the project operated. Some of the major challenges included:

- 1 New dynamics around how Parliament works as a result of having a hung parliament and a Speaker from the opposition.** This increased the unpredictability surrounding engagements with MPs and their availability to take part in project activities. The project addressed this by engaging Chairpersons and Ranking Members of the various target committees extensively in planning and scheduling activities. These actors were instrumental in rallying committee members to take part in project activities.
- 2 Political primaries in 2023 and electioneering campaigns in 2024 exacerbated the issue of the unavailability of MPs for project activities.** MPs, per their mandate, are very busy people – often juggling parliamentary business, constituency engagements and other activities. Electioneering activities added an extra layer, reducing the time available for the project to engage MPs. During these periods, the project primarily focused on working with parliamentary staff and GSS.
- 3 Reforms within the Parliamentary Service, which resulted in a change in roles for some staff, as well as movements across departments.** This meant the impacted project beneficiaries from the research and committees departments were less likely to apply the skills and knowledge acquired on the project to support MPs in monitoring the SDGs. Notwithstanding this, the project ensured that new staff deployed to the Research and other relevant departments of Parliament received the necessary training and capacity-building.

What Did We Learn?

Internal learning was an integral part of DAP. Periodic reflections throughout the project provided valuable insights to guide implementation and inform necessary adaptations. Some of the important things we learned that could benefit other projects include:

- 1 Embedding evidence use in institutions, particularly public institutions, requires engagement at the highest levels, and more importantly, at the technical level.** Engaging at the technical level ensures that transitions at the top, due to changes in governments, institutional reforms, and retirements, do not negatively impact projects, gains and results, or ensure that the impact is minimal.
- 2 Actions by other actors have the potential to reinforce and sustain project gains.** DAP's visibility as a result of its achievements has made other actors in the space take notice. It has generated interest in this line of work, with some pursuing similar initiatives. The British High Commission/UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, for instance, engaged and consulted DAP partners when designing an initiative that was seeking to enhance collaboration between the UK Office of National Statistics, GSS and Parliament.
- 3 Sustained engagement and regular communication with key actors in Parliament yield results.** This was evidenced by the successful collaboration in organizing the Data Fair. Parliament leadership and IDRIG were well invested in the successful implementation of the activity. This was a lesson that was relevant and had to be applied throughout both phases of the project.

4 **Needs assessment at the start of a project should not be the only basis for developing interventions during the implementation phase and should be conducted continually.**

It is important to constantly check the needs of beneficiaries of capacity-building interventions at every point. During a staff training, for instance, we realized that we had overestimated the capacities of staff around data interpretation and analysis, which meant the training was set at a higher level. The team only realized that staff lacked basic data skills when they arrived on-site. While projects like DAP do not have control over participant nomination processes in Parliament, it is important to find innovative ways of conducting pre-intervention assessments and adjusting the content of training in a timely manner.

5 Adaptability and flexibility are key to achieving results. Being flexible to adjust project workplans and the design of interventions based on the changing context has been useful in meeting the needs of beneficiaries. DAP has had to introduce new activities in response to demand from MPs and staff, and modify the approach for delivering interventions. An example is DAP's approach to training. DAP learnt to complement in-person large group trainings with small group virtual trainings and technical accompaniment for parliamentary staff. While project beneficiaries often prefer physical training, the time available to conduct it is often short and does not allow trainers to delve deeper and cover a lot of ground. Follow-up short virtual trainings, targeted at small groups, ensure that deficits from face-to-face trainings and emerging needs are addressed.

6 Building trusted relationships and networks as enablers of data or evidence use. Heightened collaboration between Parliament and GSS through DAP made it easier for GSS to introduce data innovations, such as the StatsBank and MPI, to MPs and drive interest in the use of these resources to support decision-making.

Recommendations

For organizations, funders and stakeholders seeking to support evidence work in parliaments, the following recommendations are proposed:

- > **Strike when the iron is hot** - seize opportunities and recognize enabling factors within the environment that will support and sustain change.
- > **Conduct continuous needs assessment** - conduct periodic reviews of the needs of project beneficiaries to ensure that interventions are actually responding to their needs and to changes in the context.
- > **Build relationships and strong networks** - build relationships and networks across ecosystems to ensure stakeholders are engaged and supportive; sharing knowledge supports efficiency in project delivery and sustainability of project outcomes.
- > **Cultivate institutional memory** - support the development of institutional-level systems, such as documenting best practices and the provision of guides and templates, to reduce reliance on individual champions and ensure continuity despite political turnover.
- > **Foster political will and champions** - identify and support parliamentary champions who can advocate for the use of evidence, mobilize peers, and maintain momentum within political spaces.
- > **Ensure locally relevant and accessible evidence** - promote the production and packaging of evidence that is locally generated, policy-relevant, and tailored to the needs and working styles of MPs and committees (for example, briefs, infographics, dashboards, and community score card findings).



Conclusion

Implementing DAP I and II over the last five years has been a rewarding effort not only for project beneficiaries but also for the implementing partners and the EIPM ecosystem locally and globally. Over the period, we witnessed incremental improvements and change at individual and institutional levels.

At the individual level, we are very proud of the contribution DAP has made in equipping MPs and staff with relevant knowledge and skills for data access and use. There is a high level of awareness around the need for data to support parliamentary processes, and a demonstrable interest on the part of MPs and staff, owing in part to the DAP's interventions.

At the institutional level, reforms and the institutionalization of structures, including (but not limited to) the establishment of the Data Management Department and invitations to the Government Statistician to brief the House, demonstrate the project's impact.

Innovations at GSS to respond to the unique needs of Parliament as a data user also reflect some of the institutional-level changes that have occurred as a result of DAP. We are confident these changes will be sustained in the long term.

Finally, DAP has been an important contributor to the evidence ecosystem in Ghana and beyond. The synergies built with other evidence actors across geographies not only provided the opportunity to share experiences and influence the work of others, but they also served to reinforce the credibility of DAP II partners - ACEPA, GSS and OTT Consulting as credible actors who are making valuable contributions to fortifying the field. DAP has birthed new partnerships and collaborations that will contribute to sustaining the project's achievements and to strengthening democratic governance in general. DAP also contributed to building the EIPM field by sharing learning through a number of publications and other channels. These pieces of work serve as valuable resources that can inform the work of other actors in the field, particularly within the context of parliaments.

During DAP II, the project worked within the context of a hung parliament - the first of its kind in the Fourth Republic of Ghana - with interesting incentives and dynamics around evidence use. At the end of DAP II, Ghana had a Parliament with one side having a two-thirds majority - another first in history. While a lot of work has been done and progress achieved when it comes to improving capacities for evidence use in the Parliament of Ghana, there is room to do more to boost and sustain the culture of evidence use for decision making, given the dynamic and evolving nature of the Parliament of Ghana and parliaments in general.



**African Centre
for Parliamentary Affairs**

No. AGR/2B, Farmland,
Beach Road, Accra

+233 30 295 6811
+233 26 583 7007

info@acepa-africa.org
www.acepa-africa.org



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