CENTRAL REGIONAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

NUTRITION UNIT

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INTRODUCTION

Nutrition has generally made a lot of progress as evident in the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey, but the gains have been uneven, with increasing geographic disparities. In order to address these challenges the focus was to increase coverage of high-impact nutrition-specific interventions that ensure optimal nutrition of the people of Central Region throughout their lifecycle. Special reference was made to maternal health and child survival as well as collaboration with relevant sectors to ensure high coverage of nutrition-sensitive interventions to address the underlying causes of malnutrition.

The projected population of the Region currently stands at 2,563,228 with a population growth rate of 3.1%. The table below shows the breakdown of population by districts for 2019.

Table 1: Population Breakdown by Districts, 2019.

	2019			Expected Pregnancy	0-11months	6-59months	Chn < 5yrs
District	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**				
Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese	61,597	66,546	128,143	5126	5126	23706	25629
Agona East	51,190	51,982	103,172	4127	4127	19087	20634
Agona West Municipal	68,258	69,310	137,568	5503	5503	25450	27514
Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam	73,216	79,106	152,322	6093	6093	28180	30464
Asikuma-Odoben Brakwa	66,944	67,978	134,922	5397	5397	24961	26984
Assin North Municipal	95,817	97,296	193,113	7725	7725	35726	38623
Assin South	61,689	62,644	124,333	4973	4973	23002	24867
Awutu Senya East Municipal	64,317	65,312	129,629	5185	5185	23981	25926
Cape Coast Metropolis	89,460	96,699	186,159	7446	7446	34439	37232
Effutu Municipal	40,694	41,315	82,009	3280	3280	15172	16402
Ekumfi	29,720	31,998	61,718	2469	2469	11418	12344
Awutu Senya	51,196	51,979	103,175	4127	4127	19087	20635
Gomoa East	123,397	125,282	248,679	9947	9947	46006	49736
Gomoa West	78,910	81,304	160,214	6409	6409	29640	32043
Komenda-Edina-Egyafo-Abirem Municipal	76,708	82,872	159,580	6383	6383	29522	31916
Mfantsiman	76,703	82,870	159,573	6383	6383	29521	31915
Twifo Heman Lower Denkyira	32,814	33,318	66,132	2645	2645	12234	13226
Twifo Ati Morkwa	36,751	37,324	74,075	2963	2963	13704	14815
Upper Denkyira East Municipal	43,309	43,978	87,287	3491	3491	16148	17457
Upper Denkyira West	35,438	35,987	71,425	2857	2857	13214	14285
REGION	**1,258,128**	**1,305,100**	**2,563,228**	**102529**	**102529**	**474197**	**512646**

Key National Unit Objectives

1. To increase coverage of high-impact nutrition –specific interventions that ensure optimal nutrition of Ghanaians throughout their lifecycle with special reference to maternal health and child survival

2. To ensure high coverage of nutrition –sensitive interventions to address the underlying causes of malnutrition.

3. To reposition nutrition as a priority multi-sectoral development issue in Ghana.

For the year under review, the National targets were as follows:

Indicator	**Target**
Early Initiation of Breastfeeding	95 %
Infant 0 – 3 months practicing Exclusive Breastfeeding	90%
Timely complementary Feeding	80%
Children breastfeeding at 12 months	80%
Malnutrition rate (Underweight)	< 6%
CMAM Cured rate	≥ 75 %
CMAM Defaulter rate	≤ 15 %
CMAM Death rate	≤ 10 %
Routine Vitamin A Children 6-59 months	90%

KEY UNIT INTERVENTIONS

- Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition
  - ✓ Maternal Nutrition
  - ✓ Promotion of appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding
- Nutrition Rehabilitation
  - ✓ CMAM-Rehabilitation/management of malnourished children
- Community Based Growth Promotion
- Micronutrient Deficiency Control
  - ✓ Vitamin A deficiency Control
  - ✓ Iodine Deficiency Disorders
  - ✓ Iron Deficiency Anemia
- Promoting Healthy Eating and Healthy Lifestyle

CHALLENGES AT THE BEGINNING OF 2019

- Poor or weak counseling skills on Infant and young child feeding among Health workers.
- Data inconsistency and inaccuracy in the DHIMS
- Inadequate data collection tools (Scales, infantometer, registers and tally sheets) at service delivery points.
- Shortage of commodities (Vitamin A capsules).
- Poor or improper weight and height assessment.

KEY REGIONAL TARGETS AND PRIORITIES

- Conduct at least two (2) mentoring and support visit to districts on nutrition services (CMAM,CIYCF, GMP & MCH RB and ENA)
- Ensure nutrition data quality in DHIMS
- Reduce malnutrition rate 4% to 3 %

- Increase Vitamin A coverage of children 6- 59mths from 45% to 60%
- Increase cured rate from 67% to 75% (CMAM)
- Decrease defaulter rate from 25% to 15% (CMAM)
- Increase CWC coverage of under-five (5) from 41% to 45%

KEY ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

- Trained 40 GHS and 40 GES staff on Girls Iron Folate tablet supplementation (GIFTS)
- Implemented GIFTS programme in all 22 districts.
- Conducted Mentoring and supportive supervision on Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) to six districts.
- Organized one (1) review meeting for Nutrition Officers
- Conducted monthly nutrition data validation and gave feedback to the districts
- Designed monthly league table of nutrition data from DHIMS for the districts
- Lobbied for scales and infantometers from national level.

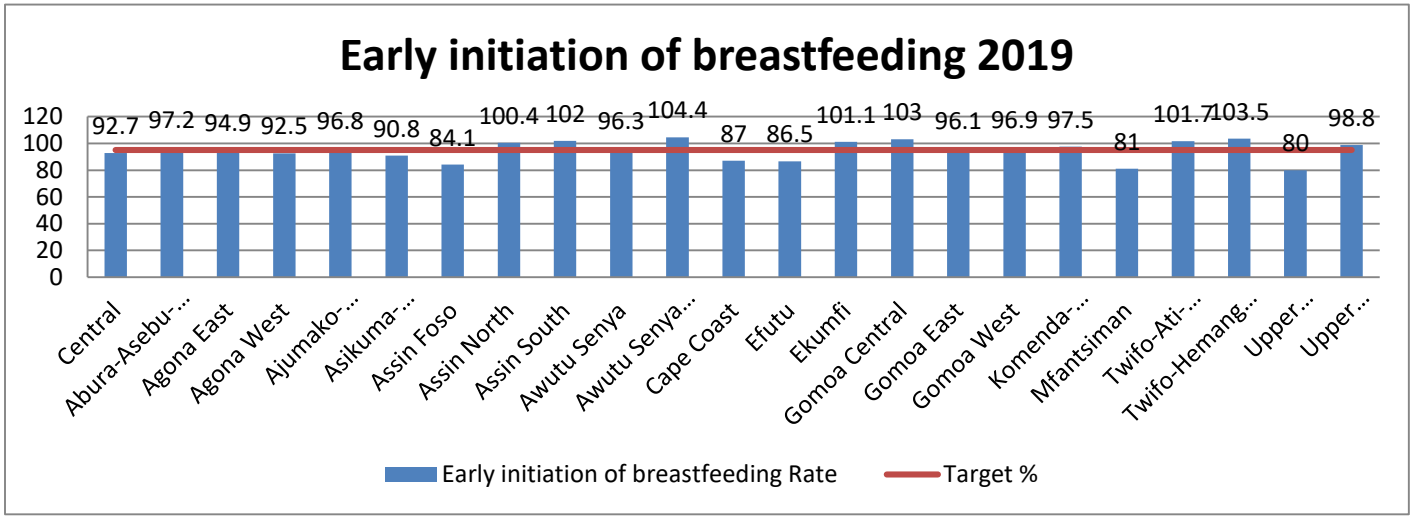
REGIONAL PERFORMANCE

Early Initiation of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both the mother and infant. Breast milk contains all the nutrients an infant needs in the first six months of life. Breastfeeding protects against diarrhoea and common childhood illnesses such as pneumonia, and may also have longer-term health benefits, such as reducing the risk of overweight and obesity in childhood and adolescence.

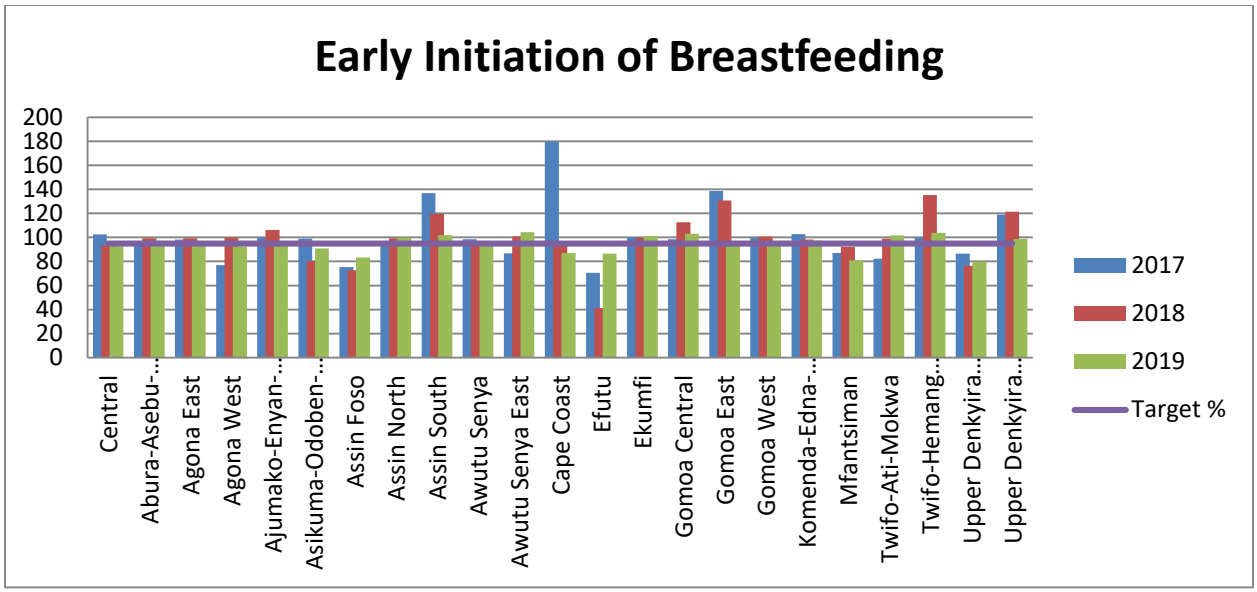
Provision of mother's breast milk to infants within one hour of birth is referred to as "early initiation of breastfeeding" and ensures that the infant receives the colostrum, or "first milk", which is rich in protective factors. (https://www.who.int/elena/titles/early_breastfeeding/en/).

Ghana however, has adopted early initiation of breastfeeding to be within the first 30minutes



after birth. The assessment of this is however, restricted to only skilled deliveries only.

Most districts were able to meet the regional target of 80% with the exception of Upper Denkyira East, Mfantseman, Effutu and Assin Fosu. Assin North, Assin South, Ekumfi, Gomoa Central, Twifo Atti mokwa and Hemang Lower Denkyira on the hand recorded more than 100% indicating data inaccuracy.



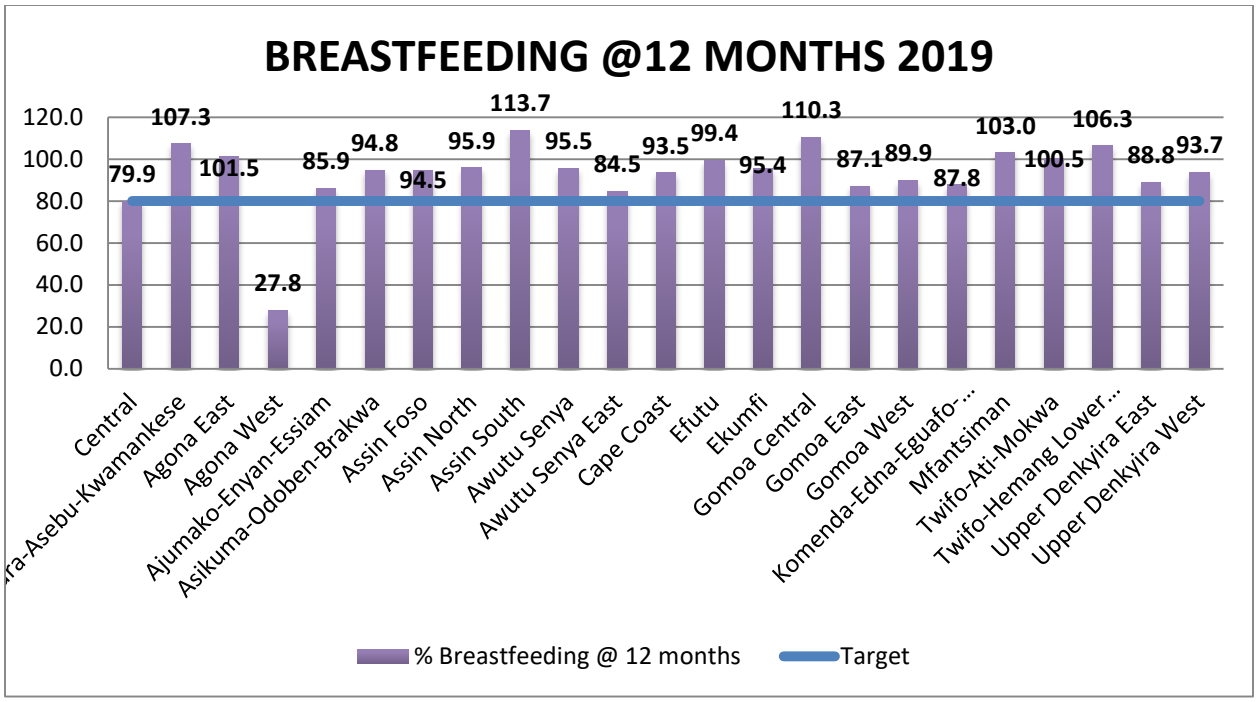
Most districts over the 3 year trend have tried to meet the regional target of 95% with Efutu making more progress in the year under review. The region has consistently met the target.

Breastfeeding at 3 Months

This is an indicator in the routine data collection system (DHIMS II) to track how infants are fed at the time of PENTA 3 vaccination, when the babies are 3 months old.

The graph below shows the percentage of infants who were being breastfed exclusively. Caregivers who presented their infants at 3 months for growth monitoring and promotion were asked how the infants were fed. The responses were coded under whether they were giving only breast milk or they added other liquids or foods to the breastfeeding (Supplementary feeding). The region could not reach the target of 90%.

The graph below shows the breastfeeding at one year situation in the region. The regional target for this indicator is 80%. Most districts are doing well with this indicator except Agona West which performed woefully with a coverage of 27.8%.



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A 3 year trend shows much improvement in the regional performance. An increase from 63% in 2018 to 75% in 2019.

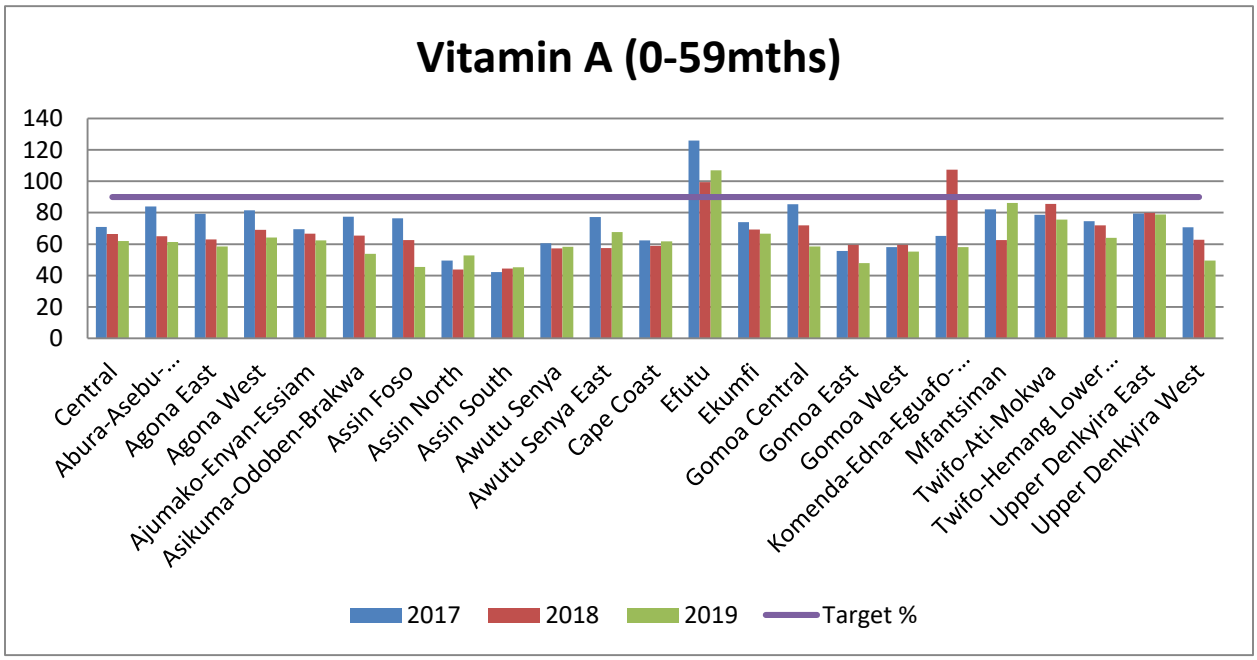
Growth Monitoring and Promotion

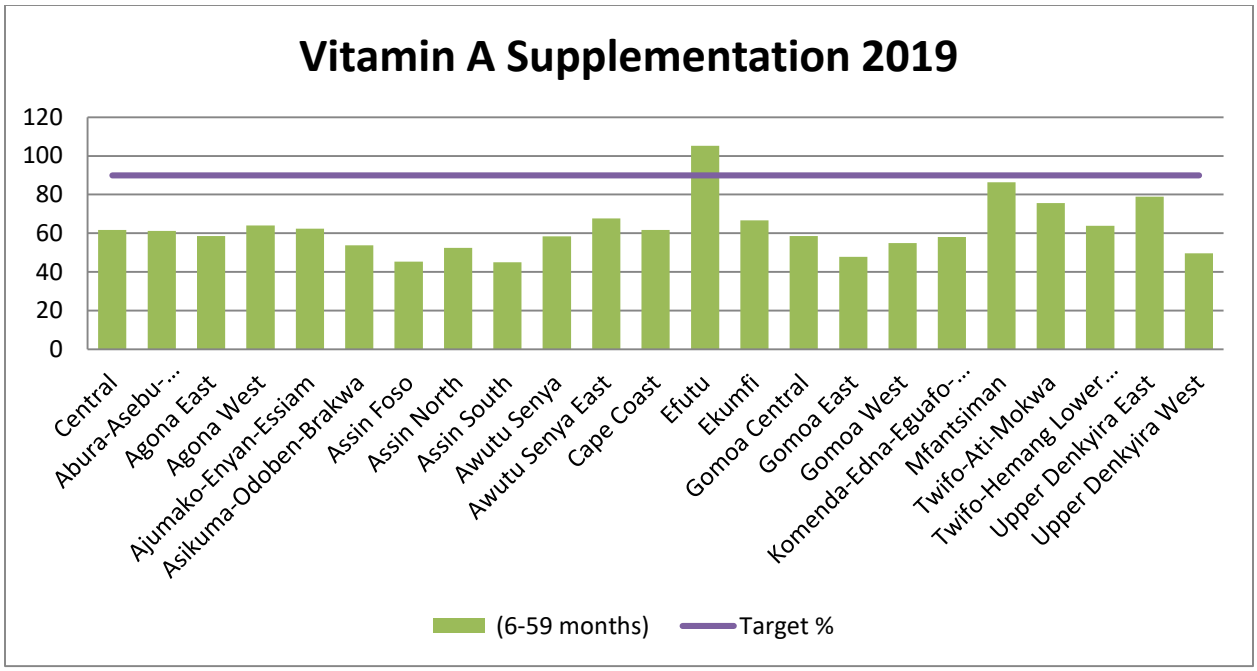
Growth monitoring and promotion services were provided through static and outreach activities to monitor the growth of children. The weights of children were monitored monthly with the aim of detecting onset of under nutrition early and intervening to prevent growth faltering. Child Welfare Clinic coverage in the region has generally been low. However, underweight has reduced from 4 % to 2.5%. This is shown in the graph below.

The region started assessing stunting from 2018 with the inception of Maternal and child health record book training which brought infantometers into the region. The region assessed 184,392 out of a total of 512,646 under five children, giving stunting assessment at 35.9% coverage. The region recorded stunting rate of 2.3% of the total number assessed.

Vitamin A Supplementation

Adequate intake of vitamin A has been shown to improve immunity, increase resistance to infections and improve sight. In Ghana, the vitamin A supplementation program provides high dose supplements to infants 6-59 months. The region is expected to reach coverage of 90% six-monthly. Dosing eligible children has been achieved primarily through mass campaigns and routine child welfare service delivery points. However, routine Vitamin A coverage has not been encouraging partly due to unavailability of vitamin A capsules in the region and partly, low patronage and poor data capture at the service render point. Strategies such as target home visits, school health and other outreach activities will be used to improve the coverage.





Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM)

The non-availability of the therapeutic food- plumpy nuts, has greatly affected the rendering of this service. Case detection, admission and management of malnourished cases have drastically reduced due to the shortage.

Girls' Iron Folate Tablet Supplementation (GIFTS) Implementation Program

Ghana Health Service in collaboration Ghana Education Service with support from UNICEF designed the Girls Iron Folate Tablet Supplementation (GIFTS) programme to provide weekly IFA supplements through schools, health facilities and other channels to help reduce anaemia among adolescents.

The following activities were carried out in preparation of full implementation of the GIFTS programme in Central region.

- Regional Sensitizations
- District trainings
- District sensitizations

- Training of frontline staff and teachers
- IFA Supplementation

Regional Sensitization: A one-day regional sensitization meeting was held on 12th March 2019, for key stakeholders in the region to brief them on the GIFTS programme and also define the roles they are to perform to make the programme successful in the region. Stakeholders from FDA, Ministry of Gender, representative from Traditional council, Muslim council, Christian council, coalition of NGOs, Media Staff from Ghana Education Service and Ghana Health Service participated in the sensitization meeting.
In addition to the stakeholders meeting, the regional team visited some radio stations to sensitize the general public on the programme.

Regional Training: The training was conducted for Nutrition Officers, Public Health Nurses from Ghana Health Service, School Health Education Programme (SHEP) coordinators and Training Officers from Ghana Education Service from all the twenty (20) districts. It was conducted in two sessions (ie first 10 districts and last 10 districts). This took place at the Jangles Hotel in Cape Coast from 19th to 21st March 2019 for first batch and 26th to 28th March 2019 for second batch.
A total number of eighty (80) participants were trained from all the twenty (20) districts and Seven (7) facilitators (four for each session) were involved in the training.
The main objective was to build the capacity of health workers and teachers to train other staff on the Folic Acid supplementation in the region.

District Sensitizations: The main objective for the sensitizations at the district level was as follows:

- To help mobilize the community members to participate fully in the GIFTS program.
- To reduce misconceptions associated with mass campaigns.
- To ensure high patronage in the various communities and schools.

Stakeholders' meetings, Community durbars, Community radio talks (using Community Information Centres), market place interactions among others, were activities conducted in the various districts. These activities took place between the period of April and May 2019.

Training of Frontline Staff and Teachers: A total number of 1,572 teachers and 579 health workers were trained at the district level. Below is the training schedule from the districts.

DISTRICT	DATE
AAK	15-17 May
AE	16-17th May
AW	21st - 23rdMay
AOB	15th -16th May
AEE	23rd-24th May
AN	21st -24th May
AS	15-16th May
CAPE COAST	15-17th May
GE	21st-23rd may
GW	16-17 May
AWS	30th-31st May
AWSE	22nd -23rd May
EKUMFI	21-22ND May
EFUTU	22nd -24th May
MFANTSEMAN	15th -17th May
KEEA	21st -23rd May
THLD	16-17th May
TAM	23rd -24th May
UDE	21st- 22nd May
UDW	

IFA Supplementation: After the district trainings, adolescents in and out of schools were screened and the IFA tablets were given to them. In all 17 districts have started implementation as at 4th June, \2019. A total number of 59,742 Adolescent in school have being enrolled on the GIFTS programme.

LOGISTICS

The table below shows the logistics received so far

ITEM	QUANTITY
IFA Tablets	25,571
In school registers	1900
Out of school registers	2050

In- school posters	440
Out – school posters	440
In- school leaflets	1000
Out-school leaflets	400

Total number of girls registered in the GIFTS Program as at December 2019

No.	District	Girls registered for In-School	Girls Registered for Out-of school	Total Number of adolescence enrolled	total pop	Coverage(%) so far
1	AAK	5350	911	6261	128,143	44
2	Agona East	7486	612	8098	103,172	70
3	Agona West	888	217	1105	137,568	7
4	Ajumako	0	1566	1566	152,322	9
5	AOB	4628	320	4948	134,922	33
6	Assin Central	1270	179	1449	101,707	13
7	Assin North	1183	530	1713	91,406	17
8	Assin South	0	1065	1065	124,333	8
9	Awutu Senya	3685	1114	4799	103,175	42
10	Awutu Senya East	6942	2403	9345	129,629	64
11	Cape-Coast	23442	1777	25219	186,159	121
12	Efutu	2989	1485	4474	82,009	49
13	Ekumfi	3308	355	3663	61,718	53

14	Gomoa Central	2659	652	3311	77,304	38
15	Gomoa East	2984	510	3494	171,375	18
16	Gomoa West	4942	681	5623	160,214	31
17	KEEA	9307	494	9801	159,580	55
18	Mfantseman	4869	693	5562	159,573	31
20	TAM	4560	594	5154	74,075	62
19	THLD	4146	416	4562	66,132	62
21	UDE	920	1044	1964	87,287	20
22	UDW	346	964	1310	71,425	16
	Total	**91344**	**18582**	109926	**2,563,228**	38

CHALLENGES

- Poor or weak counseling skills on Infant and young child feeding among Health workers.
- Data inconsistency and inaccuracy in the DHIMS
- Shortage of commodities (Plumpy nuts).
- Poor or improper weight and height assessment.
- Inadequate supply of GIFTS logistics (Tablet and registers).
- Hostile working relationship between the two sectors (GES and GHS) involved in the GIFTS programme.

Way forward

- Continue to give feedback to districts on nutrition data using the league table.
- Continue monitoring and supportive visit to the districts
- Liaise with Headquarters for supplies on GIFTS
- Continue to dialogue with GES and GHS staff at the districts level to support the GIFTS programme.