

Dawn Project Submission

Title: Empowering Rural Women and Youth through Ecofeminism and Sustainable Shea Production

Short Description of Submission:

This project empowers rural women and youth by strengthening their role in the shea butter value chain through training, eco-friendly practices, and market access. Grounded in ecofeminism and participatory action research, it supports women producers to improve product quality sustainably, preserve local ecosystems, and advocate for climate and gender justice. The initiative demonstrates how community-driven solutions can create resilient livelihoods, advance environmental sustainability, and inspire intergenerational change.

Project Background and Context:

Across Northern Ghana, rural women and youth play a vital role in shea butter production, yet face challenges such as limited market access, low income, and unsustainable practices that threaten the environment. Recognizing the potential of ecofeminism a framework that connects women's empowerment with ecological stewardship this project builds the capacity of women and youth to transform these challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth and leadership.

Project Objectives:

- Enhance the quality and market competitiveness of locally produced shea butter and its products.
- Promote sustainable production methods that protect shea trees and local biodiversity.
- Increase economic independence and financial literacy among rural women and youth.
- Advocate for climate justice and gender equality at community and national levels.
- Foster youth leadership and intergenerational knowledge sharing within communities.

Activities and Approach:

- Conduct hands-on training in improved shea processing, packaging, and branding.
- Introduce eco-friendly practices, including waste reduction, sustainable harvesting, and tree replanting.

- Facilitate market linkages and fair-trade opportunities to secure better prices.
- Use participatory action research to document women's and youth experiences and amplify their voices.
- Organize community dialogues to challenge harmful socio-cultural norms and promote climate action.

Impact and Results Achieved:

- Over 200 rural women trained in quality production and sustainable practices.
- Increased household incomes and stronger bargaining power for women producers.
- Reduced deforestation through tree planting and education on conservation.
- Youth actively engaged in advocacy for climate justice and gender-responsive policies.
- Strengthened local networks supporting women-led enterprises and eco-friendly livelihoods.

Why this Project Matters:

By combining economic empowerment, environmental stewardship, and social justice, the project offers a holistic model for sustainable rural development. It shows that with knowledge, community ownership, and small resources, women and youth can transform not only their own lives but also protect the environment and inspire systemic change.

Closing Reflection:

You don't need a lot of money to create change small, intentional actions can spark big impact. And change becomes possible when we choose to see it and believe in it, no matter our environment.