Ghana, with support from the Rapid Social Response Program, has taken one step closer to a uniform targeting system that will help identify extremely poor households—those that would benefit most from both conditional and unconditional cash transfers, as well as fee waivers for health care. So far, 70,000 beneficiaries have been identified; the long-term target is 200,000 people.

**Rationale**

Ghana became a middle-income country at the end of 2010, as a result of two decades of political stability and economic growth. But while Ghana’s economic potential is indisputable, social and economic inequality has the potential to overturn many of the country’s gains. To stabilize growth, vulnerable groups in Ghana need assistance in finding pathways out of poverty through well-designed social protection and labor programs. Ghana has several mechanisms in place to build an inclusive, socially empowered society, but there is a strong need for a common targeting system that will prioritize spending and increase credibility among the poor.
Response

With support from RSR and the World Bank, the country’s once relatively inefficient systems for identifying beneficiaries of social safety nets are being replaced by simpler, more transparent procedures. The procedures were initially prepared to support the scaling up of LEAP (Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty), the country’s main cash-transfer program; but they already have proven useful for selecting beneficiaries for other poverty-targeted programs, including the National Health Insurance Scheme and the labor-intensive works program. The work towards a common targeting system is supported by a community of donors, which provides technical assistance and monitoring to measure progress against annual targets. The new method uses a combination of community-based targeting and proxy-means testing. The communities themselves validate the final list of beneficiaries, to address possible errors.

RSR financed the initial analyses, field-testing, development of guidelines for implementing the targeting system, and training workshops on how to use and work with the system.

In parallel with the new targeting system, Ghana is developing a single register for all programs targeting poverty. The adoption of the single registry will be coordinated with the introduction of the nation’s first biometric electronic ID system, which is under development.

Accomplishments to Date

- Developed and tested a uniform targeting system
- Developed proxy-means testing questionnaire
- Developed guidance materials and trained policy makers on the procedures of the common targeting system

“The beneficiaries [from employment in the labor-intensive reforestation projects] have been able to use the cash income to transform their lives by financing enrollment in health insurance and using the income as seed money for micro-business…” Village Chief in Bawku District, Upper East Region of Ghana.

“For the first time in our lives we do not need to worry about the costs of health care driving the family into penury.” Enrollee in the Ghana National Health Insurance Scheme.