

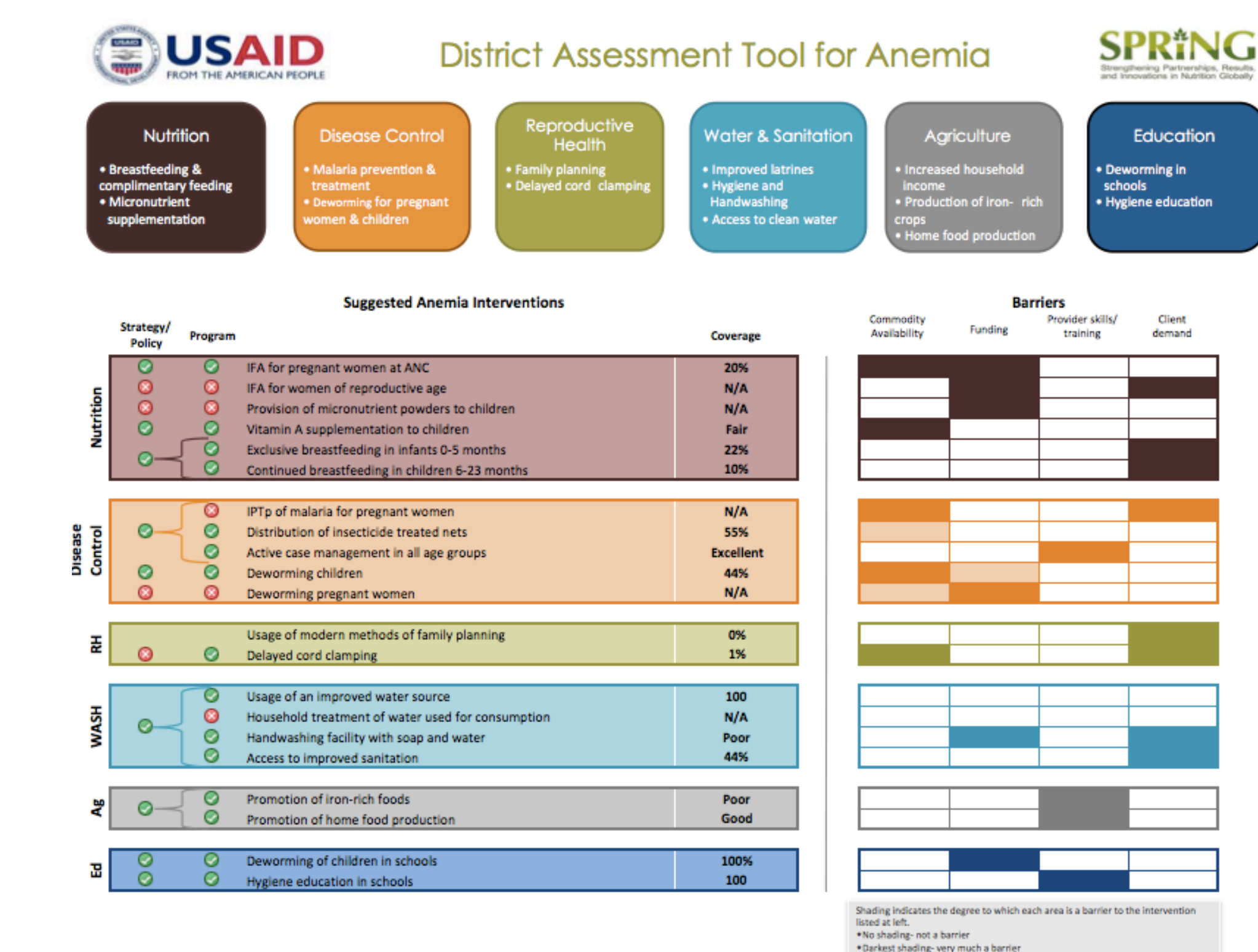
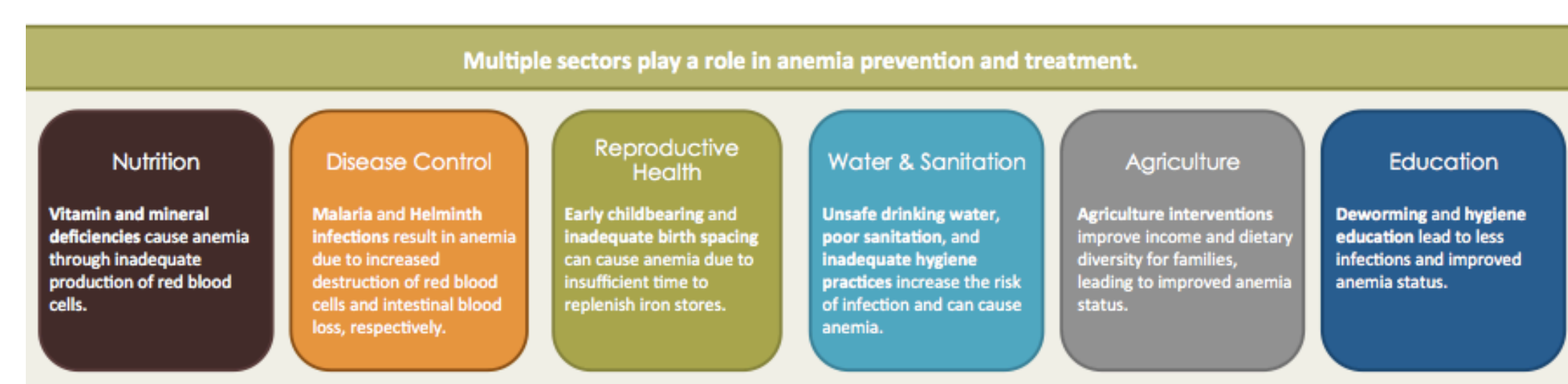
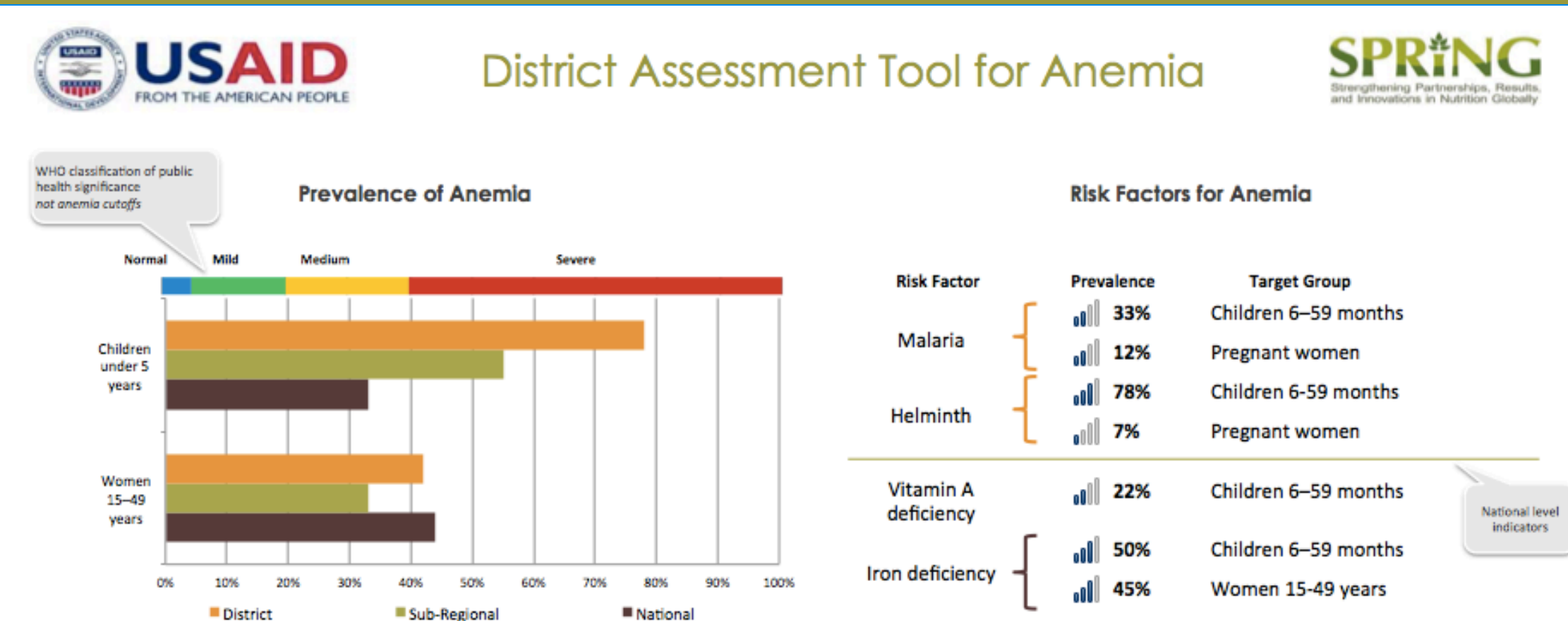
# The District Assessment Tool For Anemia (DATA) is Useful for Anemia Programming

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## INTRODUCTION

- Anemia is multifactorial in nature, and it can be difficult for district-level decision-makers to know what activities to prioritize to combat it in their specific context.
- The SPRING project has developed a District Assessment Tool for Anemia (DATA) to assist district-level program managers in understanding and prioritizing anemia programs.
- The objectives of the DATA tool are to increase awareness about the multi-factorial nature of anemia, better understand what drives anemia in a given context, and help districts plan and prioritize anemia actions using local data.
- The tool converts data from a questionnaire to snapshots of anemia and sectoral-level anemia programming in the district.
- The tool's comprehensive nature allows users to discover facets of anemia prevention and control they might have not considered and recognize the multi-sectoral effort needed for prevention and treatment.
- SPRING tested the acceptability of DATA in one context, Kumbungu district in northern Ghana.

## THE DATA TOOL DASHBOARDS



## METHODS

- SPRING/Ghana field tested DATA in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service in Kumbungu district in July-August 2015.
- First, the tool underwent “ground-truthing” at a half-day workshop at the regional level in Tamale. The “ground-truthing” exercise was designed to elicit feedback from regional-level officials about the suitability of the tool for the local context.
- Subsequently, we held a two-day district workshop in Kumbungu town involving district managers from different sectors, including health, agriculture, education, environmental health, and water works. The district workshop included a mix of didactic lectures, facilitated use of the tool by participants, group work in select teams, and multiple discussions with the whole group.
- During the workshop, district-level participants simulated the use of DATA in a district planning meeting for prioritization of anemia action.
- The participants also provided feedback on the usefulness of DATA to the discussions on prioritization.
- We collated and qualitatively analyzed feedback from both the regional and district-level workshops.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The field test demonstrated that DATA meets its objective to increase awareness about the multi-factorial causes of anemia and the need for a multi-sectoral effort to prevent and control it.
- The workshop evaluation results indicate that 95 percent of participants understand the multi-factorial causes of anemia, 85 percent understand the importance of context-specific, multi-sectoral approaches to successfully address anemia, and 80 percent know how to use DATA to prioritize district-level anemia prevention and control programs.
- Using the tool and analyzing the outputs allowed participants to appreciate the multi-faceted nature of anemia and the benefits of an integrated multi-sectoral action plan to control and prevent anemia.
- DATA output is useful to prioritize anemia action, but additional input—including on logistics, demand, compliance, and general program operations—is needed.
- There is a need to customize the tool to each district's context. This has to be balanced with the need for broad applicability of the tool across different districts in different countries.

## RESULTS

- Overall, officials noted that the tool would be a useful aide in anemia planning.
- Regional workshop participants unanimously approved of the design of the tool. They also indicated their interest in how DATA would feed into existing systems for health information.
- Feedback from the district-level workshop was also positive.
- Comments on design and usability were primarily aesthetic, and participants appreciated the presentation of the tool's outputs.
- In the regional and district workshops, and in workshop evaluations, participants requested additional guidance on standardization of the qualitative classifications that are allowed in the tool, i.e. the use of opinions in the absence of quantitative information.
- The various sectoral groups that carried out the prioritization exercise stated that the tool was a useful aide, even in situations where data were limited.
- DATA increased awareness of anemia causes and the means to address them:

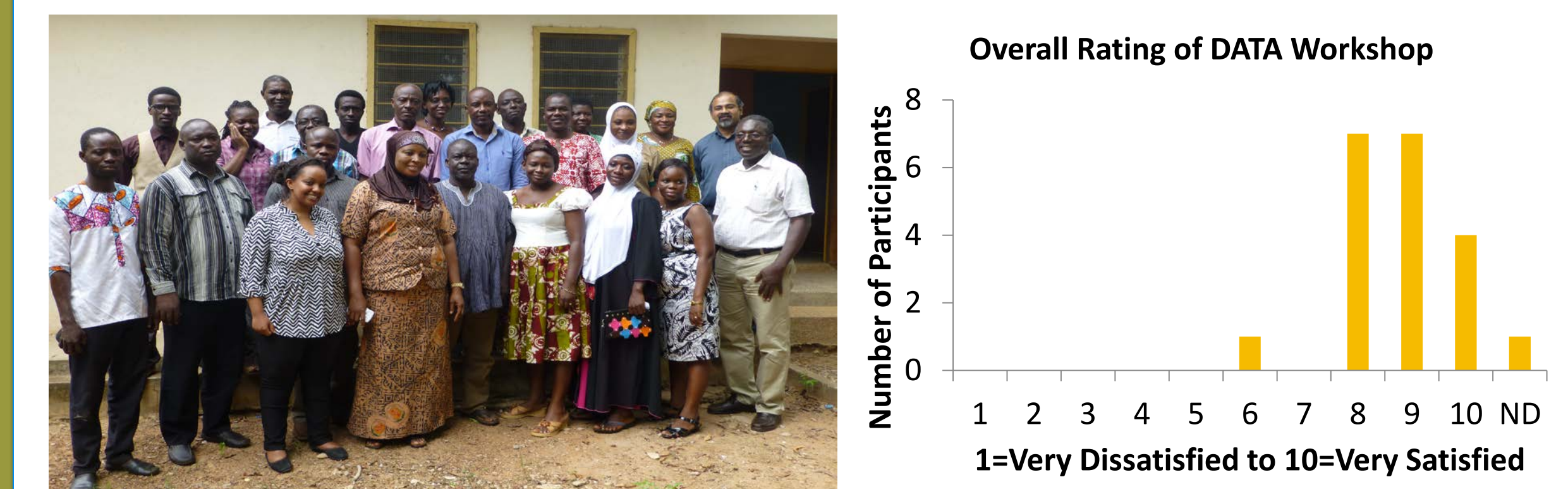
*“Understanding the multi-factorial causes of anemia and the relevance of the multi-sectoral approaches to successfully address anemia. It helps us to have data especially all the data in one point just like it is in the tool.”*

- DATA demonstrated the value of collaborating across multiple sectors:

*“Data shared during the workshop was very useful in helping prioritize activities aimed at addressing anemia in Kumbungu due to the fact that different departments have been brought together to share ideas. For so doing, issues that could have been missed out have been captured for future planning.”*

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS...

- Based on feedback from the field testing, SPRING has developed the following resources to accompany the DATA tool: (1) a Facilitation Guide, to be used by the facilitator at the district-level workshop; (2) a User Guide that describes the structure and various elements of the tool, and includes instructions on how to navigate the tool; and (3) Pre-workshop materials to be distributed to the participants prior to the workshop.
- The revised version of the tool will be used in three districts in the Northern region in Ghana in 2016-2017.
- DATA will also be tested in Nepal to allow for cross-regional comparisons



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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