

iMPACT

P R O J E C T

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES



SUSTAINING THE FUTURE OF COCOA PRODUCING COMMUNITIES

PARTNERS



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MESSAGE FROM

The Project Coordinator



Mr. Joshua Baidoo

Today, there are many challenges militating against the hopes of many small holder cocoa farmers as well as governments which depend on the commodity for its foreign exchange.

These constraints which include declining soil fertility, pests and diseases control, high cost of inputs, lack of clean water and sanitation in cocoa growing communities, inadequate healthcare facilities, poor income management and limited access to financial services, poor quality of and access to educational services extends beyond just unsustainable agricultural practices.

What is even more discouraging is the waning interest of the younger generation to carry on the trade of their forefathers due to the unappealing lifestyle of today's cocoa farmer. The collapse or at least stagnation in cocoa production in Ghana as a result of declining productivity and lack of interest undoubtedly threatens the very foundation of the national economy.

Again, there is no doubt that, this declining productivity would also have rippling effects on cocoa users as well as those who consume products made from cocoa.

It is for this and other reasons that, Mars Incorporated, one of the largest global chocolate manufacturers and cocoa users, interested in the long term sustainability of cocoa farming in West Africa launched the Mars Partnership for African Cocoa Communities of Tomorrow (iMPACT) in 2008.

The project over the last three years has employed a multi-sectoral approach combining the efforts of the various implementing partners, thus Africare, International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), Rainforest Alliance (RA), the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) as well as the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) to tackle critical issues relating to agriculture, environment, education, child development and healthcare in Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire.

The purpose of iMPACT was to develop the capacity of selected cocoa farming communities in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire to identify and improve their social, economic and environmental situation.

The project has developed and built the capacity and abilities of nineteen (19) communities within the Assin North and Wassa Amenfi West districts in Ghana through the communities' action plans that set their own priorities for implementation with technical support and guidance from the two community engagement partners, namely, CODESULT Network in Wassa Amenfi West District and Oasis Foundation in Assin North Municipal.

After three years of activities embarked upon by the various partners, it is my pleasure to present to you some of the significant change stories that have been gathered as a result of hard and dedicated activities of the various partners. I hope you will enjoy these stories and will not hesitate to contact us for further clarification or information if the need arises.



The Kindergarten Block at Ayittey Doreyem

iMPACT PARTNER ACTIVITIES

At Ayittey Doreyem

So far, so good for cocoa farmers and their children.

Three years into the Mars Partnership for African Cocoa Communities of Tomorrow (iMPACT) Project, cocoa farmers at Ayittey Doreyem, a farming community within the Assin North Municipality, have a lot of interesting stories to share as they keenly follow the

beliefs of the project partners.

On 15th March 2010, members of the community expressed their joy as the first vehicle entered the community. "We were all happy because, for many years people including the District Assembly officials thought no vehicle would be

able to come here, but the road finally opened up our community to the rest of the district and life in this community has never been the same", Mr. Emmanuel Yemoh Odoi, the community secretary recounted in an interview.

Community leaders have therefore documented this day (15th March 2010) at the chief's palace as a reminder to all members and visitors "for us is a day we will never forget that is why we have boldly put this on our notice board at the chiefs palace as a constant reminder" Mr.

to complete the Kindergarten (KG) project. The road also enables us to enjoy services of health workers who come to educate and vaccinate our children against certain diseases", he observed.

Ayitsey Doreyem and its surrounding villages have a population of about thousand (1000) people whose livelihood depends on cocoa. The community which is located alongside two Rivers- Pra and Fum, until 2008 has no school and children of school going age have to trek to school in Assin Ayitsey Camp or Obiri Kwaku



Pupils of Ayitsey Doreyem in a classroom

Odoi emphasized.

According to Mr. Odoi, the construction of the road had paved way for major development projects in the community. "As soon as the road was ready it became possible for vehicles to convey building materials into the community for us

which are three kilometers each away from Ayitsey Doreyem in different directions.

During the rainy season, the wooden bridge linking the two communities is usually covered by flood waters and school children are not able to cross over to school till the water level re-

cedes. Children between the ages of 4-5 (KG age) automatically do not go to school.

However, the faith of the community members in the tenets of the iMPACT pilot project has also led to the construction of a three classroom block that enables over seventy school children between the ages of 4 and 5 to have access to early education.

Community leaders are happy for the school infrastructure as it ends the era of young children trekking several kilometres to schools in nearby villages. “We are happy our children are learning something and we are very grateful to the iMPACT project, because we were all here thinking the District Assembly would solve our problems until iMPACT officials came to wake us up from our sleep”, Mr. Ali Djangma a community member disclosed in an interview.

Ayithey Doreyem is one of the eight cocoa producing communities within the Assin North Municipality that currently receive various support from the iMPACT partners and community members. In line with the Community Action Plan (CAP) developed by the community, International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH) supported with the provision of the infrastructure and educational materials including furniture and modern teaching and learning materials.

“Inspiration and support from the iMPACT

Partners has influenced our perception to believe that we can do something to help ourselves and with some material support from IFESH, community members worked hard to put up the KG block”, Mr. Odoi stated■

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION AND SELF HELP (IFESH)

International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH) mission is to eradicate poverty, disease and inequity through self-help partnership programs focusing on empowering individuals through the operation and support of community-based programs

IFESH works in the areas of

- literacy
- education
- vocational training
- agriculture
- nutrition
- health care.

IFESH operates its American Educators for Africa program(AEFA), Empowering Cocoa Households with Opportunities and Educational Solutions (ECHOES), Mars Partnership Project for Cocoa Communities of Today and Tomorrow (iMPACT), Community Teachers Program (CTP)and International Educators for Africa (IEFA).



Madam Fatima Ali and her children

PROGRESSING

With New Skills

A single mother of three children improves her life with new skills from the Farmer Field School.

A 52 year old Madam Fatima Ali faced severe financial challenges when her husband abandoned her few years ago. Fatima continued to look for a sustainable means to provide for her three children though she had a cocoa farm.

Through friends and neighbours, Fatima heard about the Farmer Field School and its supporting services to cocoa farmers in her community, - Nkrafuom. Although she was initially hesitant, she went to write her name to join the school.

Today, Fatima, the sole provider of the family is

happy income from her cocoa farm has enabled her to keep her three children in high school. "Increased income from the farm is helping me to support my children in school and the children sometimes wonder how I'm able to provide their needs without borrowing", she said.

With technical lessons on farm management and disease control, Fatima has more than doubled her harvest. Fatima, who described the Farmer Field School as a turning point for her entire family, also disclosed in an interview that, "at the beginning I was not sure if the new ideas from the school will work but with time I saw a

great change and this has translated into more money to support the family”.

“They taught us how to take care of the farm and key lessons such as pruning, removal of parasitic plants, spraying, diseases and pest control are helping us to get more cocoa to support our children’s education”, she continued.

What is even more encouraging is that, Fatima is not only reaping more cocoa from her farm, she is also providing technical support to other farmers who are not part of the Farmer Field School. “I take pride in helping other farmers because I believe with the relevant skills many

farmers will be able to get more money to support their children’s education”.

Fatima is one of the numerous farmers benefiting from the Farmer Field School being organized by the Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (STCP) under the iMPACT pilot project with financial support from Mars incorporated. The Farmer Field School aims at providing relevant managerial and technical skills to enable cocoa farmers within the 19 pilot communities in the two districts to increase production. Each school consists of about thirty cocoa farmers from each beneficiary community■

THE ENVIABLE

Testimony of Moses Cofie



Moses Cofie and sons

In Tekyikrom, - one of the remotest cocoa producing communities within the Wassa Amenfi West District, there is a young man whose success within the past two years is inspiring many cocoa farmers to attend the Farmer Field School in order to improve their living standards.

Moses Cofie, a thirty two (32) year old cocoa farmer, whose achievement within the past two years has gone beyond expectation, did not hesitate to associate

his success to the Farmer Field School. With smile and confidence, he said, “I am now able to take care of my children and two brothers in secondary school (Senior High School) without



begging for loan due to increasing income from my farm as a result of new skills acquired from the school to manage our farms”.

According to Moses, the increased yield from his eight (8) acre farm from 25 bags to 65 bags (1,600kg to 4,160kg) over the last two cocoa seasons has enabled him to build a three (3) bedroom house at Tekyikrom. Pointing to the house he said, “I have not expanded my farm, it is the same farm but the new farming practices have helped me to get more money to build this house in two years”.

Moses who estimated his total expenditure on the building to be over eight thousand (8,000) Ghana cedis (about 5,500 US dollars), also disclosed he had also bought a building plot with four thousand (4000) Ghana cedis in Kumasi, the Ashanti Regional capital for residential purposes.

Attributing these achievements to the Farmer Field School (FFS), he said, “most of us were losing a lot of cocoa due to bad practices but lessons on regular weeding, spraying, pruning and removal of parasitic plants on the cocoa trees has enabled the number of cocoa pods per tree to increase”.

This he explained has compelled many farmers from surrounding communities which are not benefiting from the iMPACT project to engage his services. “Farmers and members of my church from other communities come to receive advice from me on how to take care of their farms with the hope to increase their yield in the near future”, he stated.

In 2008, iMPACT partners initiated the Farmer Field School (FFS) as a pilot programme in 19 communities within the Assin North and the Wassa Amenfi West districts to provide training support for cocoa farmers to improve their social, economic and environmental situations.

With the strong conviction that through best practices and adherence to the required standards of farm practices, cocoa farmers will increase productivity with sustainability, the

Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (STCP) and the Rainforest Alliance, over the past two years have provided skills training support to over one thousand farmers within the project communities.

“We believe very strongly that with new skills through our training programmes, cocoa farmers will be able to produce more and increase their incomes in an environmentally and socially responsible manner”, Mr. Sylvanus Agordoku, the Senior Participatory Extension Specialist of the STCP stated this in an interview. Mr. Agordoku who expressed satisfaction about the active participation and acceptance of the new technologies also concluded that, “so far the results are very encouraging and we believe they will continue to hold unto these practices after we have withdrawn”.

The Farmer Field School (FFS) concept employs tried and tested agronomic technologies for better cocoa farm management. The school is so practical by design and sessions are held on the farms where theory is complemented with demonstration, observation and participation■

SUSTAINABLE TREE CROPS PROGRAMME

The Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) is managed by International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

STCP is a public-private partnership with regional and national innovation platforms. It focuses on generating growth in rural income among tree crop farmers in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

STCP implements its development program based on 5 strategic thematic areas

- productivity enhancing innovations
- marketing efficiency
- alternative income opportunities
- improved policy environment
- scaling out of core program knowledge and expertise from the cocoa belt to tree crops in other agro-ecologies



Mr. Albert Arhin working in the garden

BREAKING GROUNDS

With Demonstration Garden

What started as a demonstration vegetable garden to improve the nutrition of mothers and infants has triggered economic interest among some cocoa farmers.

The attempt by Africare Ghana to inspire and expose cocoa farmers and school children to vegetable gardening skills to boost their family nutrition, has eventually gone beyond expectation as cocoa farmers within the pilot communities discovered that the backyard garden could be a major source of income espe-

cially when the cocoa season is over.

What is even more encouraging is that, many of these farmers have already prepared their lands and are waiting for the officials of Africare Ghana and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to provide the recommended materials for plant-



ing.

Mr. Albert Arhin, a school teacher and a caretaker of the demonstration garden at Tekyikrom who disclosed this in an interview also added that, over twenty three (23) farmers have written their names to participate in an initial training session before they are offered with some seed and seedlings to replicate the project.

With smiles and happiness written on his face, Albert recounted that, most community members who did not welcome the idea of the backyard garden changed their perceptions and attitudes after they had seen the numerous benefits that could be derived from the project. "Beyond the nutritional aspect, some community members went to find out the market price of these vegetables and returned with positive attitude towards the garden project. I am very happy that the idea of the garden is becoming a reality that would enable community members to earn additional income to support their families because, from June to August every year, we face a lot of financial hardship when the cocoa season is over", he stressed.

The chief of Tekyikrom, Nana Anani Caleb who also has written his name to participate in the training programme explained that his interest in the project stemmed from the fact that it would enable him to earn more money. "the garden project is good, because, I have found out that fresh vegetables are good for our health and we will also get income from the garden as well", he emphasized.

"We are very grateful that officials of Africare have brought this programme to us, many communities around us have come to express interest in the project so we count ourselves very lucky and we are doing our best to ensure we improve our lives with the project", Nana Caleb emphasized.

Tekyikrom is one of the eight cocoa producing communities receiving technical support from the Africare Ghana with financial support from Mars Incorporated under the iMPACT Project to improve nutrition and healthy living of cocoa



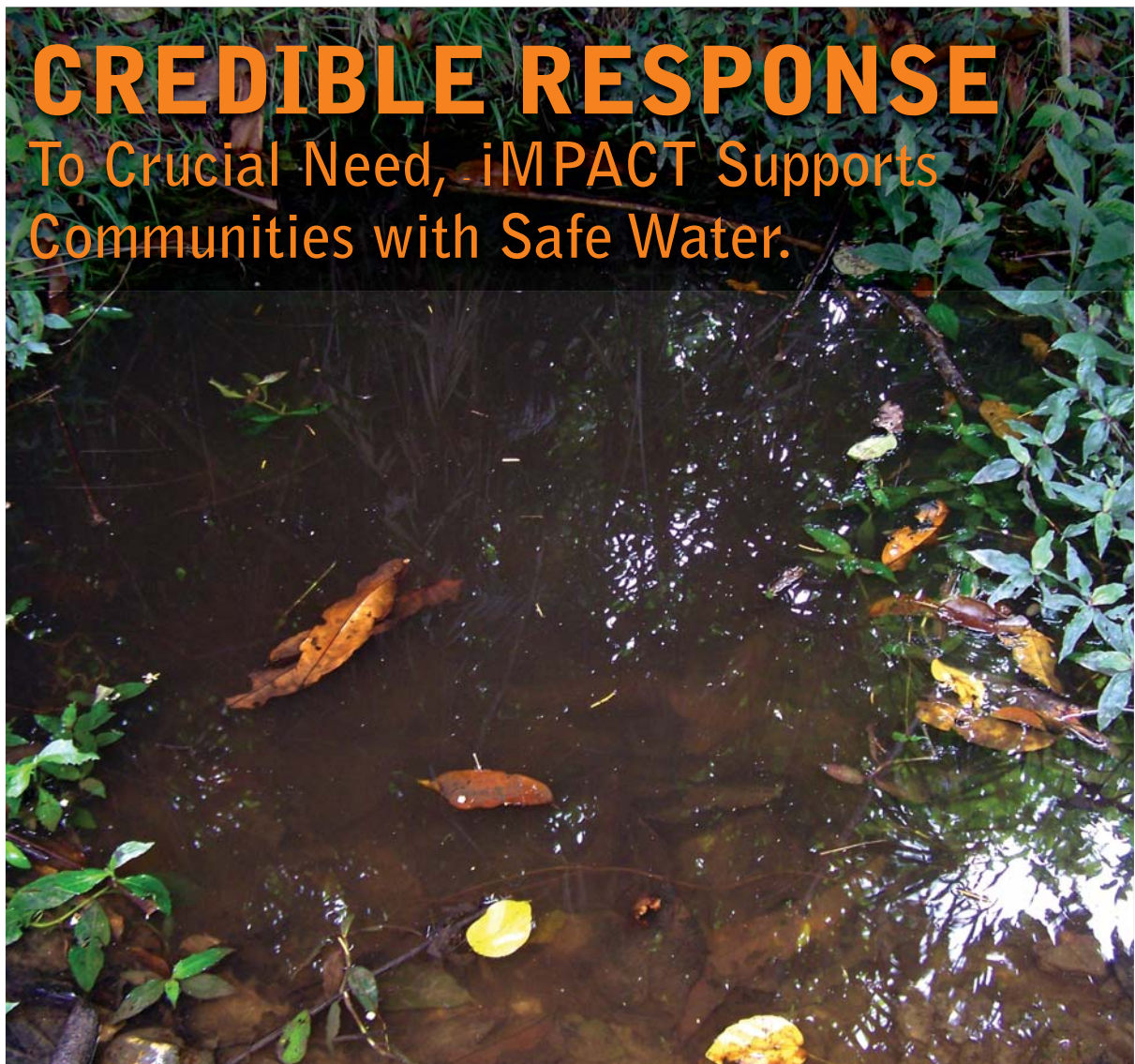
Mr. Albert Arhin watering the vegetable crops

farmers and their families. Africare Ghana under its nutritional enhancement initiative, has trained over 350 women and lactating mothers in backyard gardening, nutritious food preparation methods and infant feeding within the past one year.

Mr. John Mahama, the Africare's Programme Coordinator in the Wassa Amenfi District, disclosed in an interview that, Africare's devotion

to improve the quality of life of cocoa farmers in the project districts arises from the conviction that poor rural farmers can only liberate themselves from poverty and diseases through strong participatory initiatives that are sustainable. "We are slowly making progress by reducing certain nutritional deficiencies and we hope that with the cohesive and innovative approaches, these communities can liberate themselves from poverty, diseases and misery", he observed.

He hinted that his organization (Africare) is seeking support from other development partners to extend the project to other communities within the Wassa Amenfi West District. "We are only piloting this project in eight out of over 200 communities with similar challenges in the district and we will not hesitate to cover more communities if we have the resources", he said. ■



The pond that supplied water for people at Jaman.

Small ponds, rivers, streams and unprotected wells remain the main source of water for domestic activities in many rural communities in Ghana. Women and children

walk long distances to access water from these polluted sources which tend to be the breeding grounds for diseases such as diarrhea, bilharzias, typhoid and guinea worm.



Community members at Jaman, a farming community within the Wassa Amenfi West District of the Western region, for example, were drinking and using water from a small pond which resulted in a number of waterborne diseases until Africare Ghana stepped in to provide a well fitted with a hand pump to the community.

The water project, according to some community members has solved one of their critical needs especially during the dry season. "We are very grateful to Africare, because we got up early in the morning with our children to look for water and sometimes we could spend the whole day looking for water during the dry season", a sixty three (63) year old community member, Madam Efi Tweneboah stated this in an interview.

Madam Tweneboah who is also a member of the Jaman Water and Sanitation Management Committee strongly indicated that, the committee is working hard with the community members to ensure the facility is properly maintained. "We have not yet forgotten how we struggled for water in the past so we are doing everything possible to ensure that this borehole continues to give us water", she emphasized.

With funding from Mars Incorporated and Africa Well Fund, Africare in collaboration with key district stakeholders has increased access to safe water and sanitation through the provision of wells fitted with pumps and latrines for seventeen (17) communities within the Wassa Amenfi West and the Assin North districts of the Western and Central Regions.



Madam Tweneboah pumping for water

Africare within the past one year has also formed and trained seventeen Water and Sanitation Committees on well maintenance, sanitation and environmental hygiene practices from the beneficiary communities. Thirty five (35) teachers from 14 schools within the programme communities were also trained as trainers in Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) with their schools receiving hand wash kits.

These measures, according to Africare's Health



Project Advisor, Mr. John Eliasu Mahama, aimed at helping community members to understand the connection between polluted water and diseases and the measures that should be taken to stay healthy. "There is a close relationship between polluted water and diarrhea, so we believe that with behavior change communication involving the community members, the incidence of some of these diseases would be significantly reduced", he explained.

Medical records within the Wassa Amenfi West district on the top ten morbidity cases in 2008 and 2009, placed diarrhea second after malaria, which according to the District Director of Health Services, Mr. Emmanuel Affelkum could be traced to polluted water sources. "Diarrhea remains one of the main cases we are dealing with simply because most communities within the district do not have access to clean water", he stated in an interview.

The District Director, whose outfit received a lot of support from the Africare Ghana and the German Development Organisation (GIZ) under the iMPACT project, indicated that his outfit will sustain the achievements of the project. "We are very grateful to the stakeholders under the iMPACT project because their lines of activities support our efforts to secure healthy lifestyles for the people within the district, he emphasized.

Mr. Affelkum who described the training of health workers and community volunteers on malaria transmission, prevention, and early symptom recognition as a major step towards preventive health in the district also commended Africare for donating two (2) motorbikes to the district health unit to improve access to remote communities■

AFRICARE

Africare works to improve the quality of life in Africa working in partnership with communities to achieve healthy and productive societies.

Africare specialises in:

- helping alleviate hunger
- building water wells
- treating childhood diseases
- supporting social empowerment.

Africare's approach places communities at the centre of development activities.



RAISING THE STANDARDS

With New Skills.

After changing their land use practices to conserve the ecosystem with best management practices, cocoa producers in nineteen (19) communities of Assin North and Wassa Amenfi West districts of the Central and the Western Regions respectively will soon earn more from the sale of their cocoa beans.

The farmers who are currently going through an auditing exercise with a team of external auditors from Agro Eco-Louis Bolk Institute to examine their adherence to the required standards are confident that their compliance with the new farming practices to preserve the environment will help them to pass the certification test.

With pride and confidence, Mr. Peter Dabankah a cocoa farmer emphasized that, “for some time now, iMPACT partners have given us new skills and ideas of handling our cocoa farms and we are getting good results. That is why I am sure we will go through the certification process without any difficulties”, he emphasized.



Mr. Dennis Oppong interacting with Mr. Dabankah at Nyame Nnae

Mr. Dabanka, who praised the various initiatives under the iMPACT project, also testified that the adherence to the required standards has led to increased productivity. “At the beginning I was not sure of what we were doing but with

the new skills and technologies on best practices, today, I'm seeing the results through the increased yield from my farm. Before, I used to get only forty (40) bags but last year I harvested and sold 145 bags and I have used the increased income to complete my six bedroom self contain house at Tafo in Kumasi", he continued.

Over the past two years, Rainforest Alliance, with support from the Mars Incorporated has been providing technical assistance to cocoa

producers to improve their farming practices. The Rainforest Alliance measures sustainability by principles/standards that it has developed with the Sustainable Agriculture Network, a coalition of non-profit conservation and development organizations that work with farmers on applying the standard and certification services.

The standard (available on www.rainforest-alliance.org) contains ten principles that deal with key social, environmental and economic aspects of cocoa sustainability. Through their intervention, farmers are now planting shade trees, protecting water bodies with special attention on occupational health and land safety issues.

them to meet the required standard for the certification so that they could sell their certified cocoa at the current premium price. This according to Mr. Dennis Oppong, Field Officer for the Rainforest Alliance in the district will put extra money into the pockets of the farmers as well as help motivate them to sustain the practices for a long time.

Mr. Oppong, who visits the eleven communities benefitting from the project almost on a daily basis to offer technical support to the cocoa producers, believes that the various skills training and sensitization activities undertaken over the period will enable the farmers to go through the process.

"Having gone through the various interventions with sustainability in their minds, the producers requested our assistance to certify the compliance of their farming practices with the standard so that they could also sell their Rainforest Alliance Certified cocoa at the current premium price and we believe they will be successful", he stressed ■



Some farmers at Nyame Nae, a major cocoa producing community in the Wassa Amenfi West district are very optimistic that the adoption of the new land use practices and the consciousness to conserve the ecosystem will enable

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behaviour.

Rainforest Alliance collaborates with farmers, workers, business leaders, NGO's, governments, scientists and local communities to develop and implement standards that are socially and environmentally responsible, as well as economically viable. Rainforest Alliance has a local representative in Côte d'Ivoire, where since 2006 it has built farmer capacity to adopt its sustainable agriculture standard, in collaboration with STCP and ANADER, resulting in 1,900 farmers in six co-operatives applying for certification.



REDUCING THE AND EXPLOITATIVE LABOUR

Cocoa farmers receiving support from the iMPACT Project have declared war on the Worst Forms of Child and Forced Labour.



Pupils learning in a classroom

Whiles Children Rights Activists and the state are using advocacy and legal strategies to end child labour with so much difficulty, cocoa farmers within the iMPACT project communities have decided to end the worst forms of child labour through community initiatives.

Driven by the cultural believe that children must work with their parents on the farm to gain the needed skills to take over from their parents, they were forced to undertake certain activities that do not match with their physical strength.

Children of these farmers were requested to cart/carry both wet and dried cocoa beans, break the pods to remove the cocoa beans, as well as spray the farms without protective clothing.

and development.

Fully convinced about the need to preserve the future of their children, all the 19 beneficiary communities have established Child Protection Committees with the principal responsibility to

protect children from hard and forced labour.

Honourable Alhaji Haruna, the Assembly Member for Sabena Gold Coast Camp Electoral Area in the Assin North Municipality

who described himself as the champion of children's interests confessed that "at first we thought we were preparing the children to inherit our cocoa farms just as our fathers. But the iMPACT intervention has enabled us to see the harm we were causing the children".

Alhaji Haruna who also serves as the chairman for the Child Protection Committee in eight (8) communities within his electoral area also described the activities of the six iMPACT Partners as the turning point for child centred development initiatives within the beneficiary communities. "iMPACT activities have inspired us to take our destinies into our own hands by helping us to understand that the future of our children lies in education, that is why we have come together to ensure every child attends school and any parent who violates our collective agreement faces the Child Protection Committees", he reiterated■

HARZADOUS

R PRACTICES

Children from nineteen 19 cocoa producing communities within the Assin North Municipality and the Wassa Amenfi West district had gone through these dangerous experiences until 2007, when International Cocoa Initiatives (ICI) together with other developmental partners under the iMPACT project, took the bold step to advocate for a change in the practice.

ICI's strategic engagement and involvement of the community members led to the creation of the Community Action Plans to address the underlying causes of the Worst Forms of Child Labour as well as the general development needs of the communities. The project adopts community based approach to enable cocoa farmers, their families and communities to make the necessary changes in their labour practices with special focus on child education

INTERNATIONAL COCOA INITIATIVE (ICI)

International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) aims to oversee and sustain efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) and forced labour (FL) in the growing and processing of cocoa beans and their derivative products.

ICI works in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire on community led activities to eliminate the WFCL and FL.

ICI works with local government and other organisations to support community action, on national policy dialogue, with a co-ordinated social network that absorbs urgent cases of WFCL and FL, and informing the debate on labour practices in the cocoa sector.



Some cocoa farmers with certificates after a training workshop at Nkrafuom

BROADENING THE HORIZONS OF FARMERS

For years, many cocoa farmers in Ghana are most often in debt because they borrow money to care for their households, farms and to finance their children's education. These debts are sometimes paid during the cocoa season and as soon as the season comes to end, another round of borrowing begins. Some farmers also sell part of their cocoa farms to pay off their debts only to regret later.

But some farmers within the Assin North and the Amenfi West districts of Central Western Re-



Robert Quaye feeding his fowls

gion respectively are gradually finding new ways to depart from this perennial phenomenon. The farmers who regard themselves very lucky are diversifying their farming activities to include grasscutter farming, vegetable farming/gardening, bee keeping and poultry.

“In the past we faced a lot of financial difficulties after selling our cocoa since there was no extra money from anywhere, now I get more money from my cocoa and if I sell my fowls, I know I will get extra money to support my household activities”, Mr. Robert Quaye, the Community Facilitator for the Farmer Field School at Nkrafuom in the Assin North Municipality said this in an interview.

Mr. Robert Quaye, who is also financing the construction of a new house at his Assin Nkrafuom farming village, attributed this great change to the activities of the six iMPACT Partners in his community. He said “those who used to solicit financial support from others have all stopped because the project is helping all of us to increase our earning from our cocoa farms”. According to Robert, most cocoa farmers are not only earning extra income from their non-cocoa alternative livelihood venture, but nutri-

tion for households has also greatly improved. “Many people now feed their families well due to the lessons from the Project on nutrition and we are all grateful to the sponsors of this great project”, Robert emphasized.

iMPACT’s alternative livelihood programme implemented in partnership with the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) had developed the new revenue streams to boost the long term financial security of cocoa farmers. This according to Mr. Isaac Donkor, GIZ’s Field Officer, aims at helping the farmers to earn some money when the cocoa season is over.

We are also working actively with Ministry of Food and Agriculture to reverse the cycle of poor financial management by providing basic financial management skills to farmers within the project communities.

Many cocoa farmers who adopted and implemented the various units of the alternative livelihood module are already reaping the gains. Mr. Robert Quaye whose fowls are ready for market said he is very grateful for the various skills training support from the project. ■

BRIDGING

The Medical Gap



Nana Gyimadu at the commissioning ceremony.

The Community Health Planning Services (CHPS) facility at Bokakore is making significant **IMPACT** on healthcare delivery for many cocoa farmers.

On eleventh March 2010, iMPACT Partners in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service (GHS) officially opened a CHPS compound facility at Bokakore, one of the remotest cocoa producing communities in the Wassa Amenfi West District of the Western Region.

Seven months later, both community members and key project stakeholders are excited that the days when community members had to carry sick persons including pregnant women for several kilometres to access basic medical services are over.

Nana Gyimadu, the chief of Bokakore who described the establishment of the facility as a great relief for several cocoa farmers also added that “we welcomed the facility with joy and it has so far met our expectations”. According to Nana Gyimadu, the facility and the dedicated services of the two medical staff had ended the previous practice of carrying and trekking with sick persons to cross the Tano River before accessing basic treatments at Breman or Asankragwa which are several kilometres away from Bokakore.

Nana Gyimadu who also narrated how many people including pregnant women died on the way as they trekked to these health centres in the past, also testified that the facility had so far saved more than six persons from snake bite. "I had witnessed how many people died from snake bites in the past and I have also personally witnessed how the facility had treated and discharged some people who were bitten by snake and I'm very grateful for this facility", he stated.

The District Director of Health Services, Mr. Emmanuel Affelkum who is also happy that the facility is supporting many cocoa farmers who hitherto had to trek to Asankragwa with very minor problems are now receiving healthcare delivery from the facility. With joy and confidence, he disclosed in an interview that, "placing health staffs within the strategic locations such as Bokakore is helping us to reach more people in remote communities and we are very

seven communities if iMPACT had not provided the necessary funds for the facility".

The Bokakore facility is one of the five satellite health facilities been developed by the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service to enhance the provision of basic healthcare for cocoa producing families under the iMPACT Project. The facility has so far provided basic medical services including treatment and prevention of malaria, diarrhoea, immunisation, vaccinations, infusion, weighing and family planning to many farmers in eight other communities. These are So-roam, Nyame Bekyere, Amanhia, Wiredukrom, Sowayor, Asanteaye, Attakrom, Tehette, and Suhuma

Bokakore and its surrounding communities lack basic social amenities such as electricity and water with very poor road network. Attraction and retention of public sector workers especially teachers in these areas has remain a major challenge over the years and Nana Gyimadu is worried the community will soon loose the services of the nurses managing the facility. "We don't have facilities that can entertain the staff and our fear is that they may want to leave for a place that has these facilities", he lamented.

Despite lack of access to certain social amenities and basic household commodities such as drinking water, soap, milk and fish, life seems to be normal for Mr. Philip Mandor. "We have been here for some months now and I'm getting used to the challenges of life

and I hope to stay for sometime and move on to another place", he assured. But his assistant, Hanna Mensah thinks otherwise, "I don't hope to stay here for a long time because transportation, water and even fish is a problem and I have to travel on this bad road to get these things from Asankragwa on a regular basis", she stated in an interview■



A nurse attending to a community member at the facility

grateful to the iMPACT partners".

Mr. Affelkum who was full of praise for the iMPACT Project also stated that his outfit and the seven communities which currently receive medical support from the Bokakore facility would forever remain thankful for the initiators and the supporters of the iMPACT Project, adding that "we wouldn't have been able to reach these

STANDING

The Test of Time

Key District partner organisations of the iMPACT Project in the Central and the Western Regions have pledged to maintain and replicate the principles and the practices of the iMPACT Project.



Programme Manager Joshua Baidoo interacting with some iMPACT partners

One of the striking comments from the leaders of these organisations as the project comes to an end is that, the principles and approaches of the iMPACT Project has strengthened some cocoa farmers to improve their social and economic life.

For Mr. Peter Kodjo Dick, the Assin North Municipal Director of the Ministry of Agriculture, these principles and strategies must be extended to cover all cocoa producing communities in the country. "We have seen changes in perceptions and attitudes of farmers as they practice what the project directs them to do and it will be good

to spread out the benefits under the project by extending to many other cocoa growing communities in Ghana”, he explained.

Mr. Dick however disclosed that his outfit is actively working with other state institutions on how to extend some of these iMPACT strategies to other communities within the Assin North Municipality. “As part of our efforts to sustain the iMPACT strategies, we are going to extend these practices bit by bit to cover other communities within the municipality. Next year for example we are starting with Ghana Health Services (another partner organisation) to extend some of the health and agricultural practices to five (5) other communities which have not been part of the iMPACT Project”. He hinted.

Mr. Kwesi Meisu, the District Chief Executive of the Wassa Amenfi West district, on his part, is very happy, that support from the iMPACT Project has reduced the political and economic tension as well as burden on the key district development stakeholders. “Pressure for developmental projects such as schools and boreholes would have been more on us but the iMPACT Project activities have helped reduced these demands by providing these facilities in their project communities”, he stated.

“One major support which we value so much within the iMPACT Project is the training support for our farmers to diversify into other areas of farming which we believe within the shortest possible time will provide them with extra income”, he added.

The District Chief Executive, who strongly commended the initiators and the supporters of the iMPACT project, also pledged that he will ensure projects initiated by the iMPACT Partners are sustained and extended to other communities in the district. “The project model and

strategies are very unique and suitable for our developmental needs, so we need to continue from where the various partners have stopped by integrating these strategies into our various stakeholder activities”, he emphasised.

Another partner organisational leader, Madam Vida Margaret Odoom, the Assin North Municipal Director of the Ghana Education Service, boldly declared that iMPACT activities in the district has served as the turning point for quality education in the district. “I have been closely involved in the iMPACT activities and I can confidently say that, it is the iMPACT activities that are bringing about the changes that we are beginning to see”, she stated.

She explained that, iMPACT’s advocacy for active local level participation in the management of education resources with sensitisation of community members on their roles and responsibilities continue to whip up community interest and involvement in education delivery. “Now parents within the project communities are actively involved in educational activities with keen interest to help us improve their children’s education. This is a laudable development that must be taken to other communities to emulate”, she stated in an interview.

The iMPACT Project, which seeks to improve the socio-economic status of cocoa farmers and their families, was initiated in 2007 with financial support from Mars Incorporated. Over the past two years the project partners have tackled and addressed many challenges that had resulted in improved living conditions of many farmers within the nineteen project communities in the Assin North and the Wassa Amenfi West districts of the Central and the Western Regions of Ghana.

Some of these collective achievements include increased income due to new farming skills,

reduction in hazardous and abusive labour practices especially for children, improved educational achievement for children, improved healthcare for community members, improved land use and management as well increased income for farmers especially women through alternative non-cocoa income initiatives■

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