



CHAMPION STORIES

Leadership in Action

Felicia Owusu-Nyantaky, one of the nearly 2,000 participants in the Africa Lead's Champions for Change for Food Security leadership training, has been involved in agriculture in Ghana since the mid 1990's. Although she is currently the National Vice President of The Ghana Agricultural-Input Dealers Association (GAIDA) and owns a business with her husband, she started her agricultural career selling seeds at a market in Accra. Mrs. Owusu-Nyantaky became interested in agriculture because of her simple love for vegetables and a friend gifting her some seeds. Before this she had no knowledge of agriculture. Nonetheless, by 1997 she had a seed shop in a market in Accra, which started out small but grew to selling seeds all over Ghana.

Today Mrs. Owusu-Nyantaky spends part of her time at GAIDA, which is a national body of agricultural input dealers in Ghana. which works towards maximizing food productivity by providing services and training. GAIDA also collaborates with the government and lobbies for effect agricultural policies. Immediately after the Africa Lead training, Mrs. Owusu-Nyantaky returned to GAIDA and began working, together with its leadership, to strengthen its operational capacity. As the only women on a board of seven men, Mrs. Owusu-Nyantaky feels that the Africa Lead training has helped her realize how important things like thinking systematically, setting up timelines, and focusing on the priority resources are to improving effectiveness in agricultural development.

In addition to her work with GAIDA, Mrs. Owusu-Nyantaky and her husband were selected as beneficiaries of a Millennium Development Authority (MIDA)-sponsored agribusiness center which provides value-chain services to FBOs. The Seed Shop Company Limited imports and distributes vegetable and flower seeds, agro-chemical and agricultural tools in Ghana and West African countries. They also provide technical, extension, and post-harvest support. It has a shareholder structure with FBOs owning 30 percent with them receiving dividends at the end of each year.

Mrs. Owusu-Nyantaky participated in both of Africa Lead's Champions for Change for Food Security leadership training Modules 1 and 2 in the spring of 2011 and 2012. She has found that the knowledge she gained from Module 2 was particularly useful and relevant, specifically the section that covered donor recipient relationships and how to manage relations with the donor.

"The training helped me to build a good working team with commitment due to my motivation towards them. I was also able to prioritize my resources and set realistic time lines. With proper monitoring and evaluation I am gradually getting to my target... That same sense of urgency I got from my training has also been established within all the stakeholders, and this has increased the commitment level on their part towards achieving food security in GHANA first and AFRICA as a whole."

With the application of good communication and proper networking skills, which she acquired at the training, she has been able to maintain a good relationship with MIDA and continue to improve the success of their business. Her commitment to increasing productivity and achieving food security in Ghana, and Africa as a whole, is improving the lives of all farmers. ■