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**BUSAC Fund**

*Advocacy for the Private Sector*

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# BUSINESS ADVOCACY NEWS

THE OFFICIAL BUSAC FUND E-NEWSLETTER

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## FARMERS OVERCOME CASSAVA MOSAIC DISEASE

*Eradication of diseased plants is helping cassava farmers belonging to the Apex Farmers Association of Ghana (APFOG) to increase their productivity and income.*



The farmers who now cultivate disease resistant varieties testified that the introduction of the new varieties by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has enabled them to increase production.

A member of the Association, Mr. Samuel Annang disclosed that his output per acre has increased significantly due to the cultivation of disease resistant cassava varieties.

*Cassava farmers are now getting improved yield from disease-resistant varieties:  
Photocredit:  
<http://www.oneacrefund.org/blogs/tag/farmer/219>*

*Cover page picture: Members of APFOG working on their cassava farm at Bawjiase in the Central Region*

*“Prior to our advocacy action, the African Cassava Mosaic disease (ACMD) disease was severely affecting the output of my cultivation business. I could only harvest about three (3) tons of cassava per an acre of cassava plantation. However, with the introduction of the disease resistant cassava varieties made possible by our advocacy action, I am now harvesting between nine and twelve tons of cassava per acre, and my income has also increased significantly,”* Mr. Annang stated in an interview.

The farmers at APFOG are also delighted that technical support from the IITA and CSIR has enlightened them on how to identify and control the spread of the ACMD in their farms.

The President of APFOG, Alhaji Nashiru Kadri stated: *“Before our encounter with IITA and CSIR officials, many of our farmers could not easily identify ACMD infected cassava plants on their farms. They laboured in vain only to find out during harvests that their matured cassava plants had no tubers to harvest as a result of the devastating effects of the ACM disease. But with the technical guidance received from CSIR and IITA officials, farmers are now able to identify diseased cassava plants and eradicate them from their fields to prevent the spread of the disease to other plants.”*

The leadership of APFOG also revealed that their members’

access to market has improved tremendously as their high quality cassava varieties are now attracting interest from corporate buyers.

The Secretary of APFOG, Mr. Kwaku Boateng, stated: *“Because farmers within our association are now able to produce high quality cassava, quite a number of them are currently on contract to produce specified quantities of certain cassava varieties for a beer producing company in Ghana.”*

Members of APFOG also testified that one other notable benefit of their dialogue with CSIR and IITA officials is that their ability to add value to their raw cassava produce has improved tremendously, thus minimizing the perennial problem of post harvest losses and low prices for cassava.

Mr. Samuel Annan pointed out that as a result of the increased cassava yield, many farmers were struggling to get market for all their raw cassava crops at a good price. He further explained that the situation compelled them to approach officials of CSIR, who eventually gave them technical advice on how to surmount that challenge.

*“Those of us in cassava farming have always thought that the best way to sell cassava produce was to market them in their raw state. But we soon realized that whenever we had bumper harvests, we were often compelled to sell them off to buyers at very low prices because we*

*could not preserve them for long. Fortunately, through our advocacy action, we got into contact with CSIR officials who taught us how to attract better prices for our cassava by processing them into dried chips and flour”,* Mr. Annan remarked.

Cassava is cultivated in almost all the districts of Ghana and it is the number one staple food crop for majority of Ghanaians and a major source of livelihood for APFOG members. It is also fast becoming an important crop for industries because of its high starch content. Sadly, ACMD, a major bane of cassava growers in Ghana, has for many years caused severe yield and income losses in all production districts where susceptible cultivars are grown.

In order to curtail the spread of this disease and protect the cassava cultivation business of farmers, the leadership of APFOG sought the assistance of the BUSAC Fund to enable them advocate the use of IITA and CSIR's resources to address the African Cassava Mosaic Disease problem. With the support of its development partners, DANIDA, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided APFOG with an advocacy grant that enabled the association to effectively dialogue with relevant duty bearers on the need to develop ACMD-resistant varieties of cassava to minimize the perennial losses incurred by cassava farmers.

*Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund.*



*Freshly harvested healthy cassava tubers*



## GIVING THE LOCAL BOOK PRINTING INDUSTRY A BOOST

*There is no doubt that the approval by the Parliament of Ghana for the removal of over 40% tax levied on printing materials is a giant step towards creating a better business environment for the Ghanaian book printing industry.*

Printers and paper converters in Ghana who had fought for the removal of these levies said this development is not only a major step to protect their business but will also enable them to face the external competition from external sources.

The Secretary of the Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association (GPPCA), Mr. William Turkson, pointed out that as result of GPPCA's advocacy action, Parliament has approved a draft policy to have government remove the over 40% of taxes levied on imported inputs for the book printing industry.

*"We were able to dialogue with officials of Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Attorney General's Department and the Parliamentary Select Committees on Education and Trade and Industry.*

*During these interactions, we persuaded duty bearers about the need to remove the numerous taxes on imported inputs for local book production so as to enable locally printed books to compete favourably with imported books on the market. The draft policy has successfully gone through the various processes in Parliament, and it is expected to receive presidential assent by the end of the first half of 2015," Mr. Turkson explained.*

Mr. Tony Boamah, an executive member of GPPCA who is also a staff of Buck Press Ltd., pointed out that when the removal of taxes on the inputs for locally printed books become fully operational, it will significantly stimulate the growth and profitability of the Ghanaian book printing industry.

*"When these taxes are waived, the cost of printing books locally will be drastically reduced, and the price of locally printed books will become comparable to the price of imported books. Many publishers who were previously reluctant to engage local printers because of the high cost will now begin to print locally, thus creating more jobs and income for the local printing industry", Mr.*



*Staff at work at a local book printing firm*

Boamah noted.

But like *Oliver Twist*, members of GPPC are asking for more support from the government. They contend that the local printing industry will only benefit fully from the waiving of taxes on inputs if only government will enforce the policy that mandates government institutions and publishers to give at least 60% of their printing jobs to the local book printing industry.

*“The enforcement of the 60% local content policy will make the waiving of these taxes more beneficial to the printing industry. If the jobs are not there, why will I even import raw materials to benefit from the waiving of taxes”, Mr. Boamah asked.*

The Ghanaian book printing industry has for a long time been adversely affected by the non enforcement of Section 6 of the Protection Against Unfair Competition ACT (589) 2000, resulting in disparities in tariffs between locally produced books and foreign imports. Imported books are tax exempt whilst materials imported for local book production attract about 41% tariffs, making locally produced books

more expensive on the market with very low margins for producers. The unfriendly tax regime for local book production has been compelling publishers to print both government textbooks and all other books outside the country, causing massive job losses for book printing press houses. This has led to the virtual collapse of the local book printing industry, creating unemployment in the process. To halt this negative trend, members of GPPCA sought support from the BUSAC Fund to enable them advocate the removal of pre-production tariffs on locally printed books.

With the support of its Development Partners, DANIDA, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided an advocacy grant to the leadership of GPPC to enable them press home their demands for the waiving of taxes on inputs for local book printing. As part of their advocacy action, the leadership of GPPC had fruitful dialogue sessions with relevant duty bearers, during which they extensively discussed the need to waive pre-production tariffs to make the local book printing industry more competitive.

*Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund.*



*The leadership of GPPCA in dialogue with officials of Ministry of Finance and Ghana Revenue Authority*



## IMPROVING ACCESS TO FARM LANDS

*A 23 year old female farmer and member of the Unity and Progressive Women Farmers Cooperative Society Limited (PUWOFACS), Madam Rabinatu Yahaya, is happy that many women within the Wa Municipality in the Upper West Region now have access to arable farmlands. She said the increased access to farmlands is helping a group of women in the Wa Municipality to increase their agricultural productivity and improve upon their livelihoods.*

**M**adam Yahaya also testified that many women have gained access to arable lands, which is enabling them to expand their rice cultivation business to earn more income.

*“Here in the Wa area, access to farm lands has always been difficult for women like us. But through dialogue, we were able to convince traditional authorities, land owners and officials of the Customary Lands Secretariat in WA to release lands to women to enhance our agricultural business. In the end, the chiefs themselves assisted us to secure 10 acres of land at Nokore, a village in the Upper West region, making it possible for women of PUWOFACS to expand their rice cultivation in the new farming season”, Madam Yahaya disclosed.*

She also expressed her joy that the advocacy action presented a rare opportunity and skills for them to sit at the dialogue table to persuade traditional leaders and other custodians of lands in the municipality to release arable lands to women farmers to facilitate their farming business.

*“We are grateful for the opportunity to engage with our leaders and with our newly acquired 10-acre farmland, we hope to produce a minimum of 300 bags of rice in the next harvest, each of which will sell at an average of GH¢ 120.00. This will enable us to earn enough to feed our families and cater for our children’s education”, Madam Yahaya remarked.*

One other notable achievement of PUWOFACS is that the association’s advocacy action has opened doors of support from other development agencies.

The patron of the PUWOFACS, Mr. Salifu Adama pointed out that as a result of the advocacy action, the association had fruitful discussions with the Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition (GTLC), who have now provided two tractors to enable members of PUWOFACS to plough their farms.

Members of PUWOFACS are also testifying that



*Members of PUWOFACS harvesting rice in their farm*

their successful advocacy action has also impacted positively on the growth and development of the association.

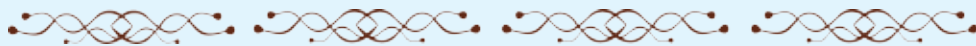
*“Seeing the positive achievements gained from our advocacy action, many women farmers in the Wa municipality have started joining our association. The total membership of our association, which stood at 439 at the start of our advocacy action, has now increased to 490, with four new other farming associations promising to join us soon”, Mr. Adama revealed.*

Traditionally, women’s access to customary farm lands in the Wa municipality has always been restricted mainly because most lands in the municipality are owned and controlled by men. Lands leased to women for farming are often small in size and non rewarding and their acquisition often required mediation by male relations. Women farmers in the Wa municipality are therefore unable to get lands for commercial farming to increase their incomes and improve upon their

livelihoods.

In an attempt to make farm lands more accessible to women farmers in the municipality, the leadership of PUWOFACS sought the assistance of the BUSAC Fund to enable them advocate the release of customary farm lands to women farmers in the Wa municipality. With the support of its development partners, DANIDA, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided PUWOFACS with an advocacy grant that enabled the association to conduct research into the problem and undergo training on how to effectively advocate. Armed with the requisite advocacy skills and empirical data from the research, members of the association were able to successfully dialogue with and persuade traditional authorities and customary land owners to lease more arable lands to women farmers for commercial agricultural purposes.

*Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund.*



## MORE ROOM FOR HERBAL MEDICINE

*Certified Medical Herbalists working at public hospitals are confident that the coverage of National Health Insurance for their services presents real opportunity for more citizens to access and use herbal medicine.*

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)-trained medical herbalists who had fought for their recognition and integration into the Ghana Health Service to secure their jobs strongly believe the coverage of certain services by the National Health Insurance Scheme will enable more persons to access the services of medical herbalists in Ghana.

This, according to them, will lead to the training of more herbal medicine practitioners thereby creating more jobs and opportunities for the development and growth of herbal medicine in Ghana.

Mr. Bernard Turkson, President of the Ghana Association of Medical Herbalists (GAMH) disclosed that the coverage of their activities by the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has made it possible for a large number of patients to patronize herbal medicine in Ghana.

*“A significant portion of our services are now covered under the NHIS. Currently, consultation and laboratory*



*Medical Herbalists at post at the Kumasi South Hospital*

*services offered by Medical Herbalists can now be accessed by NHIS card bearers at no cost. Since we started operating under this new policy, we have seen a significant increase in the patronage of our services”, Mr. Turkson remarked.*

Mr. Turkson is also excited about the fact that the increase in patronage of their services further expands the avenue for training new herbal medicine practitioners.

*“With more patients now accessing our services under the NHIS, many medical herbalists operating in public hospitals are now fully engaged on a daily basis. This*





*A nurse attending to a patient at the herbal medicine unit of the Kumasi South Hospital*

*increased volume of work makes it possible to offer practical training opportunities for trainee medical herbalists on internship at the various public hospitals”, he further explained.*

In spite of this significant early success, members of GAMH are not resting on their oars. The leadership of GAMH are pushing for other cost of herbal care to be covered under the NHIS programme. They contend that the current non coverage of the cost of herbal medicines by the NHIS limits the ability of many patients to fully access the services of medical herbalists.

“As it stands now, the coverage of our services under NHIS is still incomplete, because NHIS card bearing patients who patronize the services of medical herbalists in our hospitals can access only our consultation and laboratory services free of charge, but they must still pay cash for our herbal medicines. Officials of MoH and Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) are yet to include the cost of herbal medicines under the scheme”, Mr. Turkson explained.

In the year 2012, the leadership of GAMH, with the support of the BUSAC Fund, successfully advocated

the integration of herbal medicine practice into Ghana’s formal health care system. This successful advocacy led to the posting of over 30 trained medical herbalists to herbal medicine units in 14 different public hospitals. But with time, the medical herbalists at post were in danger of becoming redundant, as the non-inclusion of their services in the range of services covered by the NHIS was negating the benefits of integrating Medical Herbalists into the Ghana Health Service structure.

To curtail the threat posed to their job security by the state of affairs, the leadership of GAMH sought the assistance of the BUSAC Fund to enable them advocate the coverage of medical herbalists’ services by the NHIS. With the support of its development partners, DANIDA, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided GAMH with an advocacy grant that enabled the association to effectively dialogue with relevant duty bearers such as MoH and FDA on the need to include the services of medical herbalists into the range of health services covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme.

*Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund.*





## HIGHER STANDARDS FOR BETTER RESULTS



Members of Poultry Farmers Association of Ghana at a stakeholders' workshop

**Poultry farmers in the Central and Western regions of Ghana are expanding their farms through the use of standardized and improved fishmeal.**

Members of the Coalition of Central and Western Regional branches of the Poultry Farmers Association of Ghana (PFA-CCW) have disclosed that the establishment of national standards for fishmeal production for the sector has contributed significantly to the health and growth of their poultry birds. This, according to the members, has led to rapid expansion of their farms and increase in revenue.

The chairperson of the association, Ms. Gladys Acheampong explained that her farm has experienced significant expansion since she started feeding her birds with high quality poultry feed.

*“Previously, my farm had about five hundred birds in stock. But with the use of improved poultry feed, my farm grew and expanded rapidly to the extent that I am now managing about ten thousand (10,000) layers”,* Ms. Acheampong explained.

Mr. Sam Kwofie, a poultry farmer, on his part pointed out that the various interactions with the Ghana Standards Board (GSB) and the Food and Drugs Board (FDB) have enhanced his ability to identify and purchase quality feed, which is impacting positively on the growth of his poultry business.

*“Previously, my farm had just about three hundred birds and without any farm labourer. I am now applying quality poultry feed and best poultry farm practices. Currently, my farm has about one thousand birds in stock, and I have been able to employ two farm labourers. My turnover has increased tremendously”,* Mr. Kwofie remarked.

Members of PFA-CCW are also delighted about the fact that their advocacy action provided them with the opportunity to enhance their financial management and record keeping skills.

A member of the coalition, Mr. Paul Nelson stated: *“As part of the advocacy, we were taken through training on financial management and record keeping strategies; and the skills I acquired from this*



training programme is helping me to properly manage my poultry farm business and increase my incomes.” Poultry farmers of the coalition also appreciate the fact that the group’s advocacy action has greatly enhanced the advocacy skills of their members who participated in the training on how to engage duty bearers in dialogue.

*“We acquired new knowledge on how to advocate effectively and we are now aware of the appropriate authorities to approach when we are confronted with a particular problem. Some of these authorities are the Food and Drugs Board, Ghana Standards Board, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Fisheries Department”, Mr. Nelson added.*

For many years, small scale poultry farmers in Ghana have lacked access to adequate quality fishmeal for poultry feed preparation. Their main fishmeal sources have always been left-over fish parts from the tuna processing factory and unhygienically sun dried anchovi, which are unreliable and of suspect quality. As a result, the poultry farmers complained that they were losing 30% of their potential income through poor growth and ill health of poultry birds fed on contaminated feed and inadequate protein. As matter

of fact, many poultry farmers had to fold up their poultry businesses as a result of the unavailability of quality poultry feed. In a bid to find a lasting solution to this problem, poultry farmers from the PFA-CCW sought support from the BUSAC Fund to enable them advocate the establishment and enforcement of standards for the fishmeal used in the preparation of poultry feed.

With the support of its Development Partners, DANIDA, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided an advocacy grant to the leadership of PFA-CCW to enable them press home their demands for the establishment and enforcement of standards for the production of fishmeal for poultry feed. As part of their advocacy action, the leadership of GECA had fruitful dialogue sessions with officials from Food and Drugs Board, Ghana Standards Board, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Fisheries Department. During these dialogue sessions, the poultry farmers of the coalition extensively discussed the need to establish and enforce clear standards for the production of fishmeal to help develop the local poultry industry.

*Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund*



*Improved poultry feed is helping to boost poultry production in Ghana*



## THANKS FOR READING !

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