



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

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A Bi-Annual Newsletter of the Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP)

FEMALE FARMER PROMOTES PLANTING OF COMMERCIAL TREES

The loss of forest cover throughout the Western Region of Ghana is caused by clearing of the forests for agricultural purposes, urban expansion, extraction of mineral resources, and for use as fuelwood. The loss of this tree cover can have devastating impacts on soil and water quality and



Yaa Sekyiwaa at her tree nursery site

reduce the ability for trees to sequester carbon which can help mitigate impacts of climate change. In order to help address some of these challenges, the USAID-funded Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP), is undertaking a number of activities with farmers throughout the region to maintain existing tree cover and add additional tree cover that can lead to improved soil and water quality and resulting improvements in agricultural productivity and biodiversity. The

US Forest Service-managed project has encouraged conservation of secondary forest patches as sites for establishment of apiaries, integration of tree cover within agricultural fields that can improve soil quality as well as provide additional income sources, and

production of vegetables using climate resilient practices. Such activities, as well as practicing farmer managed natural regeneration of important tree species and the production of honey from her beekeeping efforts has provided farmers such as Yaa Sekyiwaa (pictured above) with greater financial income which is especially important in the off season when her cocoa and coconut production is limited.

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DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH VILLAGE SAVINGS & LOAN ASSOCIATION

In an effort to increase her economic resiliency given the high risks associated with dependence on small scale agriculture, 28-year-old and mother of two, Grace Alimatu Truba took up apprenticeship in hairdressing. Just prior to her completion from the apprenticeship, Alimatu joined one of the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) formed by the USAID-funded and US

Forest Service-managed Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) in her community, Asonti, in Ghana's Western Region. With her first loan of \$152, she was able to finance the construction of a hair dressing salon. After successfully repaying the loan, she was able to take an additional one to procure necessary start up items for her new venture.

"...the benefits I have enjoyed from joining the VSLA are very great. Aside my hair salon which is bringing additional income, I also used my savings after our share out to buy roofing sheets to complete another house so my family now feel secured in our two bedrooms".

Alimatu Truba



Alimatu standing in front of her hair salon



Alimatu working on a client at her salon

Like Alimatu, many farmers and fisher folks who are members of CSLP's VSLAs have reported and attributed significant improvement in their economic conditions thanks to the benefits derived from the savings and loans made available through participation in the associations which now number more than 33 across the Western Region. A few further examples of some of the results of participation in the VSLAs are noted below.

A local Chief of Navrongo (in Jomoro district) and a record keeper in his VSLA, Mr. Walter Cudjoe, purchased four beehives with loan from his group and is obtaining additional income from beekeeping while avoiding deforestation by using a secondary forest for the apiary. Similarly, a farmer in Tweakor No 1 (a community next to Navrongo) indicated how financial support from the VSLA enabled him to enhance his farming activities to effectively cater for his family and stopped poaching in the Ankasa rainforest, one of the last virgin forests in Ghana which borders his community.

I started selling earrings and clothing with a loan of \$38 and have now expanded the business

Juliana Doma

I became a business woman by buying and selling maize with a loan of \$155 from the VSLA

Mary Amos

With the support of the VSLA, I got money to send my child to the university. I now feel happy to have a child at the tertiary education level.

Comfort Oklety

VSLAs are member or community managed groups of 15-25 people who save together and take small loans from those savings. **(Continued on page 4)**

FEMALE FARMER PROMOTES PLANTING OF COMMERCIAL TREES

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Yaa is a 53 year old farmer in the Ellembelle District in Ghana's Western Region and is the first farmer of the CSLP project to undertake the establishment of a tree nursery as an economic venture. She started in 2016 after recognizing the importance of agroforestry practices based on lessons learned from the project trainings and awareness raising activities. By learning of

"It has not been easy establishing a tree nursery, it is labor intensive and requires greater attention. Some seedling did not survive and had to be replaced. But I have gained great experience and will increase the size of my nursery by permanently acquiring a land for it." - Yaa Serwaa, Pictured on front page.

best practices and technologies such as that of agroforestry and tree nursery management, this mother of five was motivated to start a

tree nursery. Currently, her tree nursery site has over 400 seedlings of the *Terminalia ivorensis* species (locally called emere) ready for planting and she seeks to raise over US\$200 from the sale of these seedlings. She is optimistic of raising more seedlings as she counts on increasing demand from farmers. Yaa values the importance of trees and notes that; **"...trees help to make the environment a better place, some rivers are now drying up as people have cut all the trees along the river banks."**

Given the importance of trees and the challenges farmers have in procuring high quality seedlings, it is encouraging to see farmers such as Yaa, take the initiative to raise commercial tree seedlings for planting. CSLP hopes this can serve as a long term small scale enterprise to provide Yaa with an important income source while also promoting tree cover that will improve the environmental conditions in the region.

THE CSLP TEAM

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Drama on the importance of forest by CREMA members in Cape Three Points



Drama on the importance of forest by students of Akwidaa SDA Junior High School

FEMALE FARMERS EMPOWERED TO HOLD LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Assuming a leadership role in Ghana, even at the community level, continues to be something often dominated by men. During Ghana's 2016 general election campaigns, there was great public support for increasing the number of women in parliament at the national level. The parliament that began working in January 2017, now includes 35 women out of a total of 275 parliamentarians (an increase of six women from the previous national elections). The US Agency for International Development-funded Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) is similarly interested in promoting female leaders and is doing so through empowering women in the Western Region. To date, seven of the project's Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are chaired and managed by women who had previously not held such a leadership role. Relatedly, women form 80% of the 165 management committee members from the more than 30 VSLA groups facilitated by the CSLP.

The US Forest Service-managed CSLP has also used its Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) vegetable production activities to mentor other female champions. From 18 CSA vegetable groups with over 170 members, two groups are chaired by women and 60% of management committee members are females. To further support these leaders, CSLP is supporting them with numeracy, literacy and basic record keeping skills to ensure they have the skills and resources available to manage their new found opportunities beyond the life of the project. These female leaders are making their impact felt by effectively managing their groups, serving as role models and transferring new skills in leadership to other women, men and children in their communities. As noted by some of the women, **"we now feel empowered in various spheres of life and are poised to attempt greater leadership responsibilities"**.

Within the past three years, the CSLP has improved the economic benefits of more than 600 female farmers through improved agricultural and livelihood activities using the VSLA as a sustainable financing scheme for other interventions.



CSLP farmer, Gladys Atsu addressing the media on CSLP's food security interventions



CSLP organic vegetable farmer, Cecilia Tandoh receiving award from the CSLP Director, Dr. Steve Dennison on Farmers Day



CREMA female members on an awareness creation procession

DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH VILLAGE SAVINGS & LOAN ASSOCIATION

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The CSLP helped establish 7 groups in Asonti which total more than 150 members. All these groups have now completed at least one share out cycle with average total savings of \$3000 and return on savings between 18-22%. Members are also benefiting from other CSLP interventions such as beekeeping, tree

planting/agroforestry and organic vegetable production. Without the USAID intervention, Alimata, Mary, Juliana and many other farmers and fisher folks in Ghana's Western Region would have found the ability to build economic resiliency and improve their livelihoods that much more difficult.

FARMER PLANTS OVER 2,000 MANGROVES



Mr. Sunday at wetland site

**“I am ready to restore the entire mangrove degraded area in Kamgbunli”.
“...it is very easy to replant, I pick the propagules on daily basis and plant”.—Mr. Ibrahim Sunday**



CSLP mangrove nursery site at Anyanzinli

Some people believe that “conservation without compensation is conversation” but this is not the case for 57-year old Ibrahim Sunday, a conservation committee chairperson at Kamgbunli in Ellembelle district of Ghana's Western Region. Re-planting mangroves in degraded wetland areas is his hobby. Over the past two years, he has planted over 2,000 mangrove seedlings by using the propagules. Mr. Sunday attributes his interest and commitment to this mangrove replanting effort to trainings on wetlands and mangroves conducted by the US Agency for International Development-funded Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) and its partner, Hen Mpoano (a local NGO). Mangrove forests serve as part of Ghana's natural resources and provide many benefits including habitat for fisheries, monkeys and birds as well as protection against coastal storms. The trees also sequester about five times more carbon per unit area than any other forest ecosystem, including tropical rainforest, which is an important attribute given the global effort to address climate change caused by increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Preserving the important functions of these forests was one of the reasons the US Forest Service-managed CSLP supported conservation of the Greater Amanzule Wetland area in Ellembelle and Jomoro districts as well as selected wetlands in Shama and Ahanta West Districts of the Western Region. In the Greater Amanzule Wetland area, the CSLP, Hen Mpoano and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission work in 25 coastal communities to help conserve these natural resources. Activities include participatory mapping and ground-truthing of the forests, replanting of degraded sites, training of conservation committees and implementation of supplementary livelihood activities to incentivize conservation. Maps of community wetland resources as well as land use and land cover maps have been produced to show the extent of mangrove cover, areas where mangroves have been degraded and the extent of water bodies. Between 2015 & 2016, more than 20,000 mangrove seedlings were raised and successfully transplanted onto degraded sites. In addition, degraded sites were restored with over 2,000 red mangrove propagules. Currently, the CSLP and its partners have established three nursery sites where over 10,000 high quality mangrove and acacia seedlings are raised for restoration in degraded areas. The acacia woodlot plantation will serve as an alternative source of wood for mangrove harvesters and charcoal producers who harvest mangrove wood for charcoal production.

CSLP FAST FACTS

- 6-year project on promoting coastal resiliency and food security funded by the United States Agency for International Development and implemented by the US Forest Service
- Covers six coastal districts of Ghana's Western Region with over 70 intervention communities
- Facilitated the planting of over 70, 000 trees in more than 600 farms
- Facilitated timely access to agricultural loans through the establishment of 35 Village Savings and Loan Associations with 847 members (293 men and 554 women)
- Coached more than 60 farmers to use Global Positioning System (GPS) units to map various land cover types
- Has 25 Community Conservation Committees that facilitate the effective management of coastal wetlands and mangroves
- Supported more than 200 farmers to obtain additional income through beekeeping
- Promotes the production of organic vegetables and food crops with climate smart technologies and currently has 18 enterprise groups of over 170 farmers
- Has successfully led the organization of 3 World Environment Day celebrations at the local community level
- Helping charcoal producers to adapt best management practices through the establishment of woodlots and piloting of mobile charcoal kilns.



Students of Akwidaa S.D.A. Junior High School on an awareness creation procession



A student at Agyeza Junior High School standing by a tree he planted in 2016 from the CSLP

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