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ABOUT THE GHANA DGM PROJECT

Created as a special window under the Forest Investment Programme (FIP), the G-DGM is designed to promote the inclusion of forest-dependent communities in policy formulation and initiatives that seek to reduce deforestation and degradation. The G-DGM seeks to strengthen the capacity of local communities to participate effectively in FIP and REDD+ processes and create livelihood opportunities that can also generate benefits of mitigation and adaptation, while respecting culture, traditional knowledge and indigenous forest management systems.

The key thrust of the G-DGM is the dissemination of knowledge to increase communities' understanding of how unsustainable practices heighten their vulnerabilities by contributing to climate change, which adversely affects their livelihoods, and ways to reduce deforestation and climate change and its impacts on livelihoods and well-being – component 1. The principal means of meeting this need is training.

This is followed by the demand-driven provision of grants to local communities, and community-based organizations – component 2. The grants initiative is to further engage communities to put into practice what they have learned and to better understand the linkages between the knowledge they have acquired and the investments and practices they engage in on the ground. The third project component relates to support for its effective governance, monitoring and evaluation.

The G-DGM project acts in synergy with other projects under the Ghana FIP. To promote these synergies the G-DGM is being implemented in 53 communities in the Western North, Bono and Bono East Regions where FIP is largely operational.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES JOIN CALLS FOR AN URGENT PARTICIPATORY ACTION IN RESTORING AFRICA'S LANDSCAPE



Farmers from DGM communities in a session at the GLF 2019

Farmers in local communities where the Ghana DGM project is being implemented have added their voices to the call for a concerted approach in accelerating landscape restoration in Africa. This occurred during their participation in the Global Landscape Forum Accra 2019 event held in Ghana on 29 – 30 October 2019.

Under the theme, “Restoring Africa’s Landscapes – Uniting actions from above and below,” the Global Landscape Forum Accra 2019 (GLF Accra 2019) event brought together hundreds of stakeholders in and around the continent to discuss the needs and solutions for restoring Africa’s degraded landscapes.

Key amongst the discussants were 16 farmers who represented the voices of local communities in the Bono, Bono East, and Western North Regions.

Prior to their participation in the GLF Accra 2019 event, Solidaridad West Africa through the Ghana DGM project, had raised the farmers’ awareness of climate change, the consequences of unsustainable practices on their livelihood as well as ways to mitigate and adapt to the adverse impact of climate change. Solidaridad also demonstrated other climate-smart practices to restore degraded landscapes within their communities through hands-on training.

“This forum has been a great avenue for us to contribute to a meaningful discussion and to learn from others. Climate change is a global issue that requires a united effort in tackling it – no matter the size of your community”, says Agartha Ofori, a farmer from Sefwi Benchima, a DGM project community in the Western North region.

“We are grateful to the DGM project for facilitating our participation in discussions on landscape restoration at a global level”.

At the forum, the farmers participated and interacted with other international audiences during sessions such as:

1. Accelerating the implementation of REDD+ and results-based payment in Africa;
2. Understanding rural youth migration and its leading factors; and
3. Restoring forest communities and harnessing indigenous knowledge to address climate change – lessons learned from around the world.

Besides the farmers, the event saw entrepreneurs, artists, foresters, pastoralists, policymakers, royalty, and national and international leaders discuss needs and solutions for restoring Africa’s degraded landscapes to an audience of over 800 registered participants, alongside more than 5,000 online from 99 countries.



Farmers from DGM communities at the GLF



STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE & SUPERVISION

THE DGM NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE UNDERGOES LEADERSHIP TRAINING



Facilitator illustrating a leadership concept to NSC members during training

The National Steering Committee (NSC) of the Ghana DGM project has completed a four-day leadership and community development training in Sunyani from 13 to 16 August 2019.

The National Steering Committee is mandated to monitor the progress of the DGM project implemented by Solidaridad West Africa and participate in meetings of other national REDD+ committees and FIP institutions, ensuring that DGM lessons are transmitted to ongoing national processes. The committee is also tasked to evaluate and select proposals of sustainable and climate-smart initiatives for funding and conduct themselves in a way that is transparent and ethical to ensure minimal complaints, particularly regarding DGM funding proposals.

Solidaridad organized the interactive training for the 17-member National Steering Committee to strengthen their leadership capacity and to better equip them to provide effective oversight of the DGM project.

The training exposed the NSC to practical concepts on leadership, ethics, advocacy, management of community-based natural resources and community development.

Speaking on behalf of the NSC, Hayford Duodu, Chairman of the NSC said, “We have gained better



NSC members in a group session during leadership training

insight into our role as overseers and advocates of the DGM project. We will uphold and adhere to the guiding principles we have adopted and engage in more REDD+ initiatives and climate-smart activities that will inure to the benefit of our local communities”.

NSC's Workplan for 2020

The NSC developed a work plan for 2020, which included ground monitoring of the progress of subprojects in communities and exploring other fundraising avenues for project activities. They also laid out a strategy for strengthening collaborations with other organizations and agencies to ensure effective transmission of DGM lessons.

Visit to Sunyani Municipal Assembly

The Committee also paid a working visit to the Sunyani Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) and the Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD). They learned about the structures and procedures of the local government system and their role in contributing to forest policy and resource management.

Mrs. Justina Owusu-Banahene, the MCE of Sunyani Municipal Assembly bemoaned the drastic decline of Ghana's forest resources and the urgent need to reverse the trend. She promised the support of the local government for the work of the NSC and the DGM project, which is promoting development in local communities.

The DGM National Steering Committee comprises 13 local community representatives, two representatives from local NGOs operating in the landscape and a representative each from the World Bank and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.

THE WORLD BANK EXPRESSES SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRESS OF DGM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



World Bank Task Team's meeting with Bonte chief and community members

The World Bank, the administrator of the Ghana Dedicated Grant Mechanism Project, has commended Solidaridad West Africa for the satisfactory progress in the implementation of the project. This was contained in an aide memoir released after the second World Bank supervision mission which took place on 2 - 7 May 2019.

The mission was led by the World Bank's Senior Environmental Specialist, Dr. Asferachew Abate Abebe, who is also the Task Team Leader (TTL) of the Ghana DGM project, and it included two other staff of the bank.

The mission reviewed the project implementation progress, including its compliance with the World Bank's fiduciary and safeguard policies. The team visited selected local communities in the Bono-East region for observation and to interact with project beneficiaries.

The World Bank team also engaged in a series of meetings with the management of Solidaridad West Africa, members of the DGM project National Steering Committee (NSC) and the project staff. The mission engaged with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources to strengthen the coordination and collaboration between the Forest Investment Programme and the DGM project.

In the aide memoir released following the visit, the World Bank was particularly happy with the successful implementation of Component 1 of the project, which focuses on capacity building for local communities through awareness creation as well as basic and dedicated training on climate change and REDD+ processes. The mission noted the local communities' high level of understanding of climate change vulnerability, impacts and ways to reduce both the cause and impact of the global menace.

The information dissemination approaches that Solidaridad West Africa employs in engaging local communities and other project stakeholders received a special mention.

“The use of local radios and the stakeholder-based approach of mobilizing community to

attend basic training at their most convenient times (early in the morning and evenings) helped significantly in spreading general knowledge to the communities and beyond”, noted the aide memoir.

“The innovative approach of inviting the popular rap artist, Okyeame Kwame, as project ambassador, proved instrumental in motivating communities to participate in the training (including those that were more reluctant), hence bridging the gap between communities and project teams”, the report added.

The mission also highlighted the targeted communication products, radio broadcasts, a publication on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), five episodes of radio drama, quiz competitions and the use of social media for external communication, as some of the project's strengths.

In respect of compliance to social and environmental safeguard policies, the World Bank team acknowledged structures and processes undertaken by Solidaridad to address arising issues, and recommended areas for improvement in the set-up of the Grievance Redress Mechanism.

Financial and procurement management of the project including project disbursements, procurement implementation, progress, challenges, and performance, among others were also reviewed.

Overall, the implementation progress of the Ghana DGM project was rated ‘satisfactory’, making it the second within two consecutive years since the project commenced.

The project National Steering Committee also applauded Solidaridad for the progress during the mission.

Solidaridad West Africa implements the DGM project in 53 local communities in the Bono, Bono East and Western North Regions. The project is funded by the Climate Investment Fund through the World Bank.



IMPROVING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

COMMUNITY PEOPLE'S CHOICES OF CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS: EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM THE DGM PROJECT

By Vassileva Alorvor

Scientific findings accompanied by observed manifestations indicate that climate change is neither a myth, hoax nor facade. The global phenomenon is having adverse impacts on the general wellbeing of community people and the environment. As climatic parameters experience rapid change, (such as erratic and unpredictable rainfall patterns and intense rise in temperatures) adaptation and mitigation measures are ultimately inevitable. These response measures are a necessity for local communities, since the impacts are directly affecting their livelihoods. However, community people's decision on the choice of climate change response interventions can be a very complex process. Bottom-up and participatory approaches are necessary, especially in a culturally diverse setting, where decision making is mostly centralized around power holders in the community.

The development objective of the Ghana DGM project is to empower local communities with knowledge on sustainable and climate-smart land-use practices. This takes place within an enabling governance environment, where all stakeholder groups are equipped to freely and independently determine what climate finance should support. This approach drives effective and inclusive community-based response measures for resilient landscapes and livelihoods. To this end, a participatory community-based decision-making process was rolled out in all the communities. Community people were presented with a bouquet of climate-smart and sustainable land use interventions, following intense capacity building. Once each community member selects an intervention, the DGM project team followed up to understand what influenced their choice. The project team further explored the extent to which gender and status (eg, native or migrant, leaders and power holders) in the community influenced their choice of the interventions.

The DGM project established that:

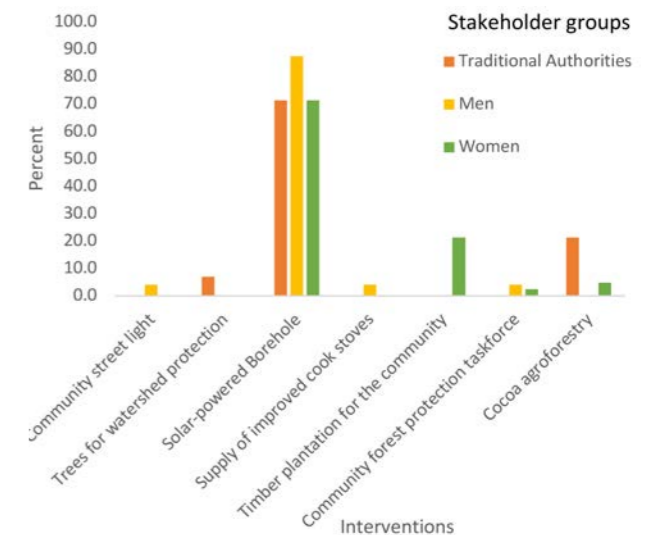
local community people are inclined to undertake climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions that are in connection with, and has the potential to improve their livelihood and developmental needs. In this sense, climate change response is rather a co-benefit of their livelihood and development activities. This was evidenced by their choice of interventions such as cashew plantations, cocoa agroforestry, and potable water access. Many in the communities were rather concerned about how these commodities could improve their incomes and at the same time respond to climate change.

The complexity of the community structure and community distribution in the landscape played a

strong role in the choices made by these communities. For instance, communities that have a high population of migrants prioritized interventions such as boreholes over those that required land access and ownership security, such as tree planting. This reflects the challenges of land ownership security for migrants and the implications for sustainable land-use practices and landscape restoration.

In a few communities, gender and status (whether a community leader or community member) influenced decision making on the choice of climate change interventions, with the majority being quite unanimous in their choice of intervention.

The figure below shows how community members at Damoakrom chose solar powered borehole over all other interventions.



Lessons

The Ghana DGM project has learned that land access and ownership security play a significant role in community people's decision making on climate mitigation interventions that involve tree planting such as agroforestry and tree plantations. And there is a great possibility of elite capture, by traditional authorities and landowners, at the expense of the community interests. Also, given the limited finance that is available for community people to respond to their diverse climate change impacts and vulnerabilities, community people always prioritize their livelihood and development needs over climate change, in spite of the fact that community people have high knowledge on the causes of climate change, impacts and response interventions. Thus, livelihood benefits should be tied to climate change response interventions, in order to drive wider adoption that is sustainable and effective.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES IMPLEMENT SMALL-SCALE ACTIVITIES TO MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE



Community people working at the cashew agroforestry plantation site at Dawadawa No.2

About 120 individuals and their local communities in Western North, Bono and Bono East Regions are undertaking climate change and REDD+ related initiatives with demand-driven grants from the Ghana Dedicated Grant Mechanism project.

The project is promoting the active participation of 53 local communities in activities that help to reduce deforestation, forest degradation and climate change. This is done by improving the knowledge base and sustainable practices of individuals through capacity building. The aim is to increase local community resilience to climate change and contribute to efforts towards mitigating the global menace.

Since ground implementation began in 2018, Solidaridad West Africa has trained more than 17,000 individuals (52% are women) in project communities through interactive engagements, radio broadcasts and engaging drama episodes.

Equipped with knowledge of climate change and its linkages to land use practices, local communities are now able to take decisions to reduce their climate vulnerabilities and willingly support tree planting activities in their communities.

To enable community members put the knowledge into practice by undertaking small-scale activities related to REDD+ and climate change, the Ghana DGM project made grants available for communities, individuals and organizations.

Grant Application Process

The individual grant was only accessible to local community members who consistently partook of the basic training and passed an oral test. Prospective applicants received additional training on proposal writing and the scope of activities eligible for funding.

Solidaridad publicly announced the call for proposals, received over 1,000 applications from DGM communities, screened the proposals into their eligibility based on thematic groups and selected 504 viable proposals for the review and final selection by the National Steering Committee.



Grant application sensitization

Selecting climate-smart Initiatives

Solidaridad employed a bottom-up participatory approach to engage all project communities and individuals to select various climate-smart initiatives that they seek to implement with DGM grants. Community-led initiatives require the full support of community leadership and the cooperation of the townsfolk and are intended to benefit all.

Generally, initiatives that individuals and local communities are currently implementing include agroforestry, communal reforestation, tree planting along water bodies, the construction of solar-powered mechanized boreholes and streetlights, and cashew plantations.

Social and environmental safeguards

To safeguard the community initiatives against potential environmental and social risks, Solidaridad conducted environmental and social screening prior to their implementation. Issues on land ownership, potential environmental impact of subprojects and other sociocultural factors that could hinder project implementation were considered. This informed the design of an Environmental and Social Management Plan, which is an integral part of DGM project implementation and monitoring strategies. The Environmental and Social Management Plan also outlines several preventive and mitigation actions for the subprojects.

Subprojects

Solar-powered Boreholes and streetlights

Thirty-eight communities across the project areas prioritized the construction of solar-powered boreholes as an adaptive action to reduce their vulnerabilities to climate stress. So far, thirty-four boreholes have been drilled successfully with piping and solar system installations underway.



Community borehole drilling site at Juaboso Nkwanta

Members of beneficiary communities are excited about the prospects of overcoming water-related stress, especially during the dry season.

“We are very grateful to the DGM project because not only has Solidaridad given us knowledge on climate change, but they have also provided us with portable water right in the center of the village. This will certainly reduce the time it takes for our wives and children to search for water for domestic use”, says Alex Addae, a resident of Benchima community in the Western North Region.

At Asepanye, a community also in the Western North Region, Sunday Akoliblah, a migrant who has witnessed how illegal small-scale mining activities from surrounding communities, have polluted the community’s river bodies, says, “the solar-powered borehole is a real game changer for many in my community”.

Tree planting

Twelve communities are implementing reforestation initiatives, tree plantations and the restoration of trees around water bodies. In all, the DGM project has raised almost 531,000 seedlings for replanting, covering about 126 acres of dedicated community lands. In most communities, activities have gone beyond the mere planting of seedlings. Currently, many are undertaking first cultural maintenance practices including weeding and beating up (i.e replacing failed seedlings). Moreover, Solidaridad has put a robust strategy in place to safeguard the young plantations as the dry season approaches.



Community tree plantation site

In the Bono area where the landscape and micro-climate favour the growth of cashew trees, Solidaridad has supplied a total of 162,482 cashew seedlings to communities within the landscape. The Dawadawa No. 2 community has successfully planted cashew seedlings on a 30-acre community land and bordered them with acacia trees as fire belts.

Similarly, the Nante and Ampoma communities in the Kintampo South District have committed to planting trees to reforest degraded lands and protect their streams from drying up.

The Ampoma community has successfully planted over 5,000 Acacia and Frake (known as Ofram in local parlance) trees to protect the watershed of the Bosomua river hampered by illegal logging activities.



DGM members in Ampoma at a section of the Bosomua river where trees have been planted

“We are proud that with the support of the DGM project, our community has been able to plant trees to protect our cherished Bosomua river. We are confident that it will serve us and our children very well,” says Confidence Appiah, a teacher and a resident of the Ampoma community.



DGM women in Nante at the community cashew agroforestry site

The Nante community has planted about 2,000 Mahogany and Frake tree seedlings on a 20-acre community land. Some individual farmers are inter-cropping the land with maize, yam and other annual crops in order to protect the young trees while they farm until the trees are well established.



Individuals from DGM communities have incorporated trees on their cocoa farms

Solidaridad West Africa has also facilitated the access to tree seedlings from the Forest Investment Programme (implemented by the Ghana Forestry Commission) and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture for individual farmers across the 53 DGM project communities. These individuals have incorporated the trees on their farms and adopted climate-smart agricultural practices. Additionally, other non-DGM communities have on their own volition accessed and planted tree seedlings on their farms, having benefited from the DGM radio broadcast on climate-smart activities.

Martin Yeboah, who lives in Donfete, a non-DGM project community, heard about the linkage between climate change and land use from his friend, who lives in Boffourkrom, a DGM beneficiary community. “Since then, I have desisted from burning my land after slashing. Even though I planned killing trees on my farm because I did not recognize their benefits, I have rescinded my decision. Today, I have incorporated more cashew and Mahogany trees on my farm,” he says.



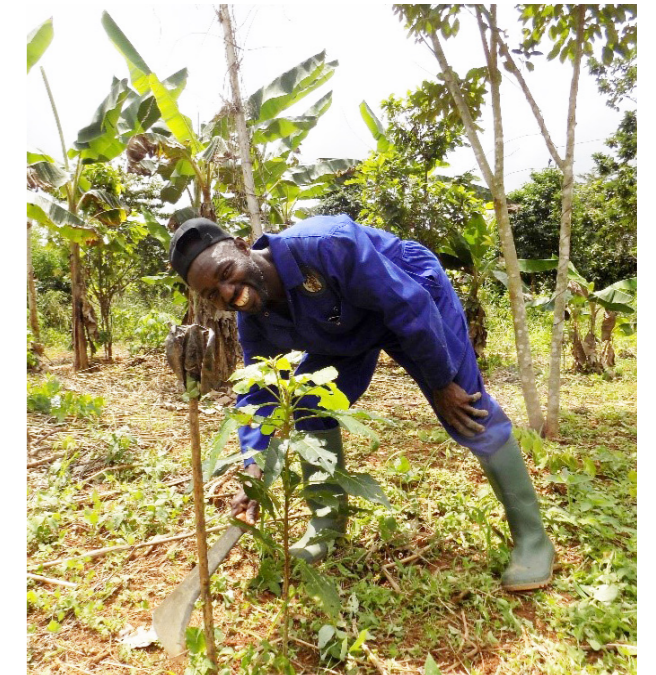
Martin Yeboah of Domfete, a non-DGM beneficiary community



Preparation of community tree nursery site



Farmers now practice shade cocoa farming



Farmers now practice shade cocoa farming



Hands-on-training for local people on improved climate-smart practices



Community people collectively work on plantations

DGM IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS SO FAR...

COMPONENT 1

BASIC TRAINING

More than 17,000



individuals trained from 53 communities

52% are women

DEDICATED TRAINING

Trained 8,415



women

migrants



54%



42%

COMPONENT 2

COMMUNITY GRANT



34 drilled boreholes

with solar mechanization ongoing



530,982 seedlings supplied to 53 communities

90,000 acacia seedlings
108,150+ economic trees
162,482 cashew seedlings

INDIVIDUAL GRANT

supporting 120 individuals from 40 project communities to undertake

climate proven interventions of which

approx. **43%**

women and migrants (1/3 of migrants are women)

120 initiatives

≈43% - climate smart cocoa

≈34% - cashew agroforestry

≈18% - tree plantation

CBO Grant



supporting 9 active CBOs

to undertake mitigative and adaptive initiatives

CHANGE THAT MATTERS

www.solidaridadnetwork.org

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO IMPLEMENT CLIMATE-SMART INITIATIVES



Some members of Elluokrom CBO working at a section of the Kyereboo river where trees have been planted

Solidaridad, through the Ghana DGM project, has supported nine community-based organizations (CBOs) in the Western North, Bono, and Bono East Regions to fully implement small-scale, climate-smart sustainable initiatives in local communities using project grants.

This followed a rigorous safeguard and risk assessment process to appraise the organizations' governance structures, membership strengths and the efficacy of their operations – preconditions for receiving demand-driven grants under the DGM project to implement climate response interventions.

The organizations were also selected based on their own track record of credibility and work footprints in the communities where they are located.

The Ghana DGM project selected the nine CBOs out of eleven pre-qualified organizations. Solidaridad took the nine through extensive training on organizational development, group dynamics, climate response, REDD+ processes and how their activities on the ground are linked to these concepts. This forms part of the implementation of the second component of the Ghana DGM intervention, which seeks to strengthen the capacity of grantees to successfully implement sustainable and adaptive community initiatives to optimize project investments.

“The DGM project support has helped us to improve our record-keeping, group development, and advocacy drive. We now feel very empowered to contribute toward efforts to restore the depleted vegetation in our cherished sacred grove”, says Madam Ruth Sidani, a member of the Agroforestry group in Jomoro.

Following the training, Solidaridad further supported the community-based organizations to select subprojects they seek to implement in response to climate change within the context of the DGM project.

In the Bono East Region, for instance, Charcoal Producers and Tree Planters Association located in three DGM project communities - Bonte, Dromankese and Kwame Danso - have secured a 15, 20 and 40-acre land from traditional authorities for the establishment of cashew agroforest, woodlots and tree plantations, respectively.

In the Koradaso community, located within a forest in the Bono Region, the Peaceful Tree Growers Association has laid out an action plan to establish a tree nursery site on an acre of community land to nurse indigenous tree species to enrich the forest. The group is also undertaking sustainable climate-smart apiculture (beekeeping) as a means to diversify the livelihood of its members.

The Community Ecotourism Management Center in Duasidan – a DGM project community, is also working towards becoming one of the best ecotourism sites in the Bono region. Here, local authorities have earmarked more than 60 acres of forest lands as protected – with a strict prohibition of hunting, farming or logging activities. The CBO is thus prioritizing the protection and redevelopment of a community monkey sanctuary for the long-term environmental and economic benefit to their community.

In the Western North Region, the Kunkumso Farmers' Association and the Elluokrom Rainforest Alliance and CREMA group have selected watershed protection as well as climate-smart apiculture as initiatives they seek to implement with DGM grants. In Elluokrom, the Rainforest Alliance and CREMA group have commenced planting of Mahogany and Frake trees along the Kyereboo river to restore the vegetation.

The DGM project has provided CBOs that seek to venture into apiculture the requisite capacity support including practical training on improved



Beekeeping training for CBOs

methods, techniques and equipment to produce good quality honey under sustainable and environmentally-sound conditions. The project has provided organizations with honey extraction machines, smokers, beekeeping suits, wax, beehives, and other tools”.

“This climate-smart technique of beekeeping has enabled us to produce pure honey multiple times in a year. It is serving as a sustainable alternative source of income for my group”, says Mr. Victor Attah Yaw, a member of the Kumkumso Farmers’ Association.

CAPACITY BUILDING TRIGGERS IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR CLIMATE ACTION

By Vassileva Alorvor

In the face of climate impacts, individuals in local communities where the DGM project is being implemented have had to address their vulnerabilities. This has been done with very little consideration for governance barriers, relating to gender, decision making and exclusion. This limits the realization of deep cuts in emissions associated with unsustainable land use practices like charcoal burning, illegal chainsaw operation and total neglect of environmental considerations in their livelihood activities. Even where environmentally driven community-based organizations (CBOs) exist, their organizational and management structures are so weak, and decision making is highly centralized that most of them are unable to attract the needed support to effectively implement their interventions.

The DGM project responded to these governance limitations by embedding organizational development and good governance principles into training programmes that targeted the CBOs. The training centered on power, relationships, responsibilities, participation, accountability, and transparency. It also touched on who has influence, who makes decisions and how climate change decision making in local communities and CBOs can be accountable and sustainable.

The training has made the CBOs competent and equipped to deliver various natural resources management and livelihood interventions in local communities in response to climate change. They

are now well structured with constitutions, bank accounts and an improved governance regime to drive interventions on woodlots, beekeeping and tree planting.

In most communities, the DGM project has broken down socio-cultural limitations that influenced women’s participation in decision making on climate response interventions. Now, more women are involved in activities funded by climate finance. Irrespective of status, community people and their leaders now appreciate that it is important to empower people to make their own decisions, and collectively pursue climate-responsive and sustainable land use practices. Community people are now showing leadership in being better stewards of their environment.



EQUIPPING FARMERS WITH CLIMATE-SMART YAM PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES



Training on improved yam techniques

More than 1,400 farmers in 21 local communities in Ghana’s Bono East region are now equipped to produce climate-smart yams after completing an eight-week intensive training under the Ghana Dedicated Grant Mechanism project implemented by Solidaridad West Africa.

Yam, a staple tuber, is an important commodity for many farmers in Ghana, as it helps to meet their household food needs and provides a reliable income.

However, many farmers lack the techniques to increase yields of the tuber with a minimal negative impact on the environment. They produce the tuber by cutting down trees or burning the vegetation that covers the soil. As the yam grows, farmers cut the stems of trees as stakes to provide support to the climber. This method of farming hurts the environment, but the farmers do it unaware of the consequences. It deprives farmers of the essential tree resources they need to improve their livelihoods.

Solidaridad partnered with the Crop Research Institute (CRI) to provide field-based, hands-on training to farmers to produce climate-smart yams that can yield more to improve their incomes. The partnership aligns with one of the core strategies of the Ghana DGM project to foster institutional collaborations to help improve local community behavior toward the environment.



Benjamin adjusting the ropes supporting the vines in his yam farm

“This partnership with Solidaridad falls within the scope of CRI’s mandate to disseminate environmentally-sound technologies to local farmers to improve their incomes”, says Dr. Stephen Yeboah, the team leader from the Crop Research Institute.

Lessons covered:

- climate-smart land preparation methods
- sustainable intercropping methods
- seedbed designs like ridges
- staking options such as the use of trellis or minimum staking to reduce reliance on wood as stakes
- preparation of improved planting material and
- integrated nutrient and pest management

Arthur Manu, a farmer in the Asekye Akrokese community in the Bono East Region, started applying the knowledge in his farm right after the training.

“I have seen visible improvements in my farm after incorporating beans and maize on my yam field. Instead of burning, I now keep the vegetation that covers the soil. This helps to keep the soil cool even on sunny days. Now, I am using less land for the same quantity of yam I planted in the last season”, says Manu.

Benjamin Amponsah, a farmer who lives in the Krabonso community also shares his experience: “After the DGM training, I decided to plant my yam on ridges without delay. This method has reduced my dependence on wood for stakes because the design of the ridges allows me to use ropes to support the yam vines instead. Weeding has also become easier and I do not need to apply weedicides as I used to”, he says.

This training forms part of Solidaridad’s effort to build the resilience of farmers and their communities to climate change under the DGM project. Beneficiaries earlier completed training in climate change awareness conducted in 53 local communities across the Bono, Bono East and Western North regions.



ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES

OPERATIONALIZING GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISMS FOR INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION IN DGM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



In line with the World Bank's guidelines on grievance redress, Solidaridad West Africa has set up a Grievance Redress Mechanism to address complaints and issues raised by communities, groups, individuals and other stakeholders affected by the implementation of the Ghana Dedicated Grant Mechanism project.

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is a core project component for managing operational risks, improving project results and creating space for inclusive participation of all actors, leaving no one behind.

Solidaridad is operating the GRM based on a three-tier system for grievance resolution, outlined in the DGM Framework Operational Guidelines.

The three-tier grievance redress system

Tier 1

The first point of contact for all grievances is with a Solidaridad field staff and community focal persons who have been trained to receive, record (into grievance registers provided) and take culturally appropriate steps to ensure that every complaint receives redress.

Tier 2

In instances where a resolution is not reached at Tier 1, Solidaridad refers the issue to the Cohort Grievance Redress Committee (GRC), who acts as the 'jury' at the second tier (Tier 2) to resolve the issue. The GRC is composed of the District Manager of the Forest Service Division of the Forestry Commission or his representative, the DGM project Senior Programme Coordinator, the Regional Coordinators, two members (male and female) from the Area Council, a representative of a local community-based organization or NGO, a member of the clergy, two focal persons (male and female) as well as a chief and queen mother from the traditional authority.

Tier 3

The third and final level of the grievance resolution involves the operation of the Central Grievance Redress Committee (CGRC). If complainants are

not satisfied with the outcome of the resolution process at the second tier, they are entitled to elevate the grievance to the CGRC, who will ensure that the aggrieved individual receives redress.

The chairman of the project's National Steering Committee (NSC) chairs this committee with the DGM project manager, a representative from the Forest Investment Programme and a legal officer from the Forestry Commission serving as members.

"This system will allow us to share concerns we have about the DGM project and foster cohesion between our community and Solidaridad. When they address our issues well, we would have nothing against the project but will fully support its implementation", says Ernest Boahen, the focal person at Camp 15 community.

Daniel Oppong, a member of a community-based organization in Elluokrom also says: "We commend the DGM project for establishing this unique and proactive system to ensure that we bear no ill feelings about the project. We will certainly make use of it".

The Grievance Redress Mechanism falls within Solidaridad's approach of providing inclusive and sustainable solutions to improve supply chains for the benefit of farmers, producers, miners, and their communities.

"Solidaridad is committed to ensuring that any reported grievance – regardless of its nature – receives immediate attention and redress in the shortest possible time. We have consciously made the process transparent, fair and efficient so that all local communities can take full advantage of it" says Edward Kyere - Senior Programme Officer at Solidaridad.

Solidaridad has trained all community focal persons of the project in the Western North, Bono and Bono East regions, as well as members of the GRC on how to amicably handle complaints from community members and other stakeholders using the three-tier resolution process.

GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM PROCESSES

Tier 1 Community Level Grievance Redress Processes



1 Report your issue to the DGM field team or your community focal person. Once reported make sure the issue is recorded in the grievance register dedicated to your community



2 The DGM field team will discuss the issue further with you to resolve it if possible



3 Once you are satisfied with the response, it will be recorded as such in the grievance register.

If you are not satisfied with the response, the issue will be referred to the Cohort Level Grievance Committee for further action



Tier 2 Cohort Level Grievance Redress Committee



1 The Cohort Grievance Redress Committee will hear the issue from the complainant.



2 The committee takes a decision and informs the complainant about it.



3 Once you are satisfied with the response, it will be recorded as such in the grievance register.

If you are not satisfied with the response, the issue will be further referred to the Central Grievance Redress Committee for action.



Tier 3 Central Grievance Redress Committee



1 The Central Grievance Redress Committee will hear the issue from the complainant for the last time.



2 The committee takes a final decision and informs the complainant about it.



3 When the complainant is satisfied, this will be recorded in the grievance register appropriately.

If you are still not satisfied, the team will continue to talk to you until there is an agreement



INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

FIP COLLABORATES WITH THE DGM PROJECT TO SENSITIZE LOCAL COMMUNITIES ON GHANA'S WILDLIFE AND FOREST POLICY



Forest and Wildlife Policy sensitization programme in Kintampo

The Ghana Forest Investment Programme (G-FIP) collaborated with the Ghana Dedicated Grant Mechanism (G-DGM) project to sensitize more than 270 individuals on Ghana's Forest and Wildlife Policy in June and August 2019. The beneficiaries were members of CREMA groups and local communities in the Bono, Bono East, and Western North Regions, where Solidaridad implements the DGM project.

Prior to 2012, farmers in local communities had little incentives to plant or allow naturally occurring trees to grow on their farms. They felt no benefit nor right to trees that grow on their farms. Some were concerned that once the trees mature, the government would give felling right to timber merchants without their consent, and often with little or no compensation to crops damaged in the process.

Even though the current Ghana Forest and Wildlife Policy emphasizes tree ownership, rights and benefits to farmers, many of them are still not aware of this provision and thus reluctant to maintain trees or plant new ones.

The Ghana FIP and the Ghana DGM project sought to raise awareness of the favorable provisions in the Ghana Forest and Wildlife Policy 2012 to encourage more farmers to support tree planting and maintenance.

Issues discussed:

- Tree tenure and benefit-sharing
- Tree registration
- Rights and responsibilities governing resource utilization
- Climate change
- Building local adaptation to secure livelihoods and
- Effective participatory forest management

Solidaridad also shared the progress of the DGM project implementation and how it is working closely with the Ghana Forestry Commission to facilitate the registration of planted trees in all 53 project communities.

Participants also shared the lessons they have learned from the sensitization programme.

"I am now convinced to plant trees on my farm and discontinue killing young trees. Besides the economic benefit I will gain from it in the future, I also have the responsibility to keep the trees for my children's children. Thanks to DGM and FIP for the education", said Nana Kwabena Agyare, a farmer from Kintampo.

Mr. Tabi Agyarko, the Project Manager of G-FIP said, the objective of the sensitization programme was to fight climate change and protect Ghana's forest resources. He said since the implementation of the G-FIP and G-DGM project, many district offices of the Forest Services Divisions have witnessed an increased demand for tree seedlings from communities where the two projects are being implemented. He urged the participants to continue to support the two projects to help fight climate change and slow down deforestation and forest degradation in the country.

The G-FIP is implemented by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources with the objective of addressing the underlying drivers of deforestation and catalyzing transformational change. It achieves this by providing upfront investment to support the implementation of REDD+ strategy while generating information and experience for policy and regulatory changes in Ghana.

Both the G-FIP and G-DGM are funded by the Climate Investment Fund under the auspices of the World Bank.



GHANA DEDICATED GRANT MECHANISM FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES



Editors:

Bossman Owusu
Priscilla Animah Obirikorang
Dr. Winston Asante

Layout & Design:

Prince Adu-Appiah

Photo Credit:

Samuel Boadu
Gabriel Ahoma

Send feedback to

Knowledge Management Specialist
bossman.owusu@solidaridadnetwork.org

Solidaridad West Africa

PMB KD 11, Kanda, Accra, Ghana
Hse No. 18 Okine Street, East Legon, Accra

PHONE: +233 (0) 307 001 687

WEBSITE: www.solidaridadnetwork.org

EMAIL: ghana@solidaridadnetwork.org

