The Pathways Programme
Economic Security for Poor Women

BACKGROUND Pathways programme is inspired by the vital roles that women play around the world in smallholder agriculture, meeting the food needs of their households and contributing to development and growth. The vision of the program is empowered women smallholder farmers celebrated for their contributions to achieving secure and resilient livelihoods and sustainable futures for their households, communities and beyond. The programme is implemented in Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Bangladesh, India and Tanzania.

OBJECTIVE The programme’s aim is to increase women farmers’ productivity and empowerment in more equitable and resilient agriculture systems at scale. This will be achieved by improving the economic security of women smallholder farmers and their households through increased productivity and access to inputs and markets. The project supports the development of the soybean and groundnuts value chains

STRATEGY The programme uses the Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS) model which is a hands on, learning by doing approach through which groups of farmers meet regularly during the course of the cropping cycle to experiment and learn about new production and marketing options. Embedded in the FFBS are five (5) Strategic Approaches:

- Nurturing collectives and community groups.
- Promoting intensified, resilient and sustainable agriculture.
- Developing more inclusive and efficient market services.
- Engaging men and boys in the process of change.
- Learning and evidence building.

Project Name: Pathways Programme
Time frame: 2012-2018
Geographical Coverage/Beneficiaries: 2 regions +2 districts =85 communities

- Upper east region- Garu Tempane district
- Upper West region- Lambussie district

Donors
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Big Lottery Fund.
- Margaret Cargill Foundation.
- Jeff Peierls Foundation.
ACHIEVEMENT

Increased Productivity: Through the use of community based extension agents and improved linkage with MoFA and access to agricultural extension services by project participants increased from 24.6% in 2012 to 79.1% in 2015. This has resulted in an over 50% increase in yield for soybean and groundnuts by beneficiaries.

Improved Access to Inputs: Community-level input fairs have contributed to a significant increase in access to inputs by women farmers. The project has currently developed a community input dealership scheme in collaboration with major regional input supplies. This scheme will further enhance farmers’ access to affordable and quality inputs.

Improved Access to Market: The percentage of project participants who sell their farm products outside their local markets increased from 16.4% in 2012 to 35% in 2015. Collective sales of soybean to recognized buyers improved from 45 tons (USD 15,750 at $0.35/kg) in 2013 to 95.77 tons (USD59, 377.00 at USD0.62/kg) in 2014.

Gender: The facilitation of community gender dialogues and activities of 108 (30female, 78male) trained gender champions have improved women’s access to productive resources and improved gender relations. During the 2015 cropping season, 1,389 women gained access to productive lands for farming.

SUCCESS STORY

Soy Bean has changed my life!

Baka Hawa is a 55 year old widow from Naawie in the Lambussie Karni District of the Upper West Region of Ghana. She is a member of a Village Savings and Loans Association; and a beneficiary of the Pathways Programme since 2013.

She has an acre soybean farm where she has adopted and implemented good agronomic practices she learnt from the project, during the 2014 cropping season, she harvested 450kgs of soybean from her farm.

She makes an average profit of one hundred Ghana cedis (about 25 US Dollars) per month from the sale of the weanimix. Through the business, she has been able to buy a donkey at the cost of GHC 350.00. With this she ploughs her farm, and makes money from ploughing other farms as well. Hawa also purchased a used refrigerator which she uses to preserve and sell soy milk, water and other local beverages to make additional income.

“With this, I am able to adequately meet the basic needs of my family which hitherto was not the case. I have been able to meet the protein requirements of my family through the use of soy recipes and my grandchildren in particular look very healthy and are doing very well in school thanks to Pathways”.

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