

# 2011



Migration and Development

## FOOD SECURITY PROJECT

Maize and soya production in northern Ghana



### Program Specifics

- The farmers will be trained to operate at least 5 acres of land.
- Hybrid seeds will be used
- The farmers will be trained to become commercial farmers
- Herbicides, fertilizers, pesticides etc. will be provided to the farmers
- Target consumers will be established food processing companies



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## Executive Summary

This report gives an overview of the Food Security pilot project being implemented under migration and development program in 2010/ 2011. The project was implemented in Buoko Ghana. The focus of this project is to improve the livelihood of poorer farmers in Ghana while encouraging migrants to invest their remittances in extensive agriculture in their country of origin. The project is concerned not only in contributing towards economic development of migrants in their home countries, but also it enables migrants to play a potential role towards the development process in the host nation.

The Food Security Project is implemented by employing the skills and services of local community youth and women already involved in agricultural production. It seeks to support small holder maize farmers to expand their farms by training them into engaging in commercial farming through the use of improved agricultural farming practices and improved technology to increase their productivity and enhance their incomes.

In addition, the project adds value as it encourages and builds the capacity of the women and youth involved in the project. Individual farmers are mobilised and trained to become commercial farmers by giving each farmer from a minimum of 1 acre to 5 acres or more to farm on.

The pilot project which began its implementation from December 2010 allocated a 100 acre farm land in Buoko Wenchi in Brong Ahafo Region. Buoko is selected because the community has a greater percentage of poorer household. Also the land obtained from the chiefs was also a big complete block (undivided) to be used for farming. In addition, annually Buoko has two farming seasons which is a unique characteristic compared to other parts of Ghana.

Furthermore, the Food Security Project has diverse project partners and stakeholders both within Ghana and the Netherlands. The role of each project partner differs and their contribution ranges from funding, supervision, training and implementation of the project. Major project partners and potential stakeholders who were involved in project implementation were AfroEuro Foundation, Oxfam Novib, Abban Company Limited, Sinapi Aba Trust, Premium Foods, Advanced, Sefa & Jane, Ghanaian Migrants in Netherlands, Local Community Chiefs and Farmers in Wenchi. The project is supervised by an Agriculture officer from Advance (a United State aid agent). The food security project has a unique feature in connecting value chain production system to enable partners' supports farmers while giving a ready market to their harvested product. AfroEuro Foundation which is the main coordinator of the chain plays an important role in mobilising the farmers, negotiating with traditional chiefs to release farm land to be used for farming and provision of mechanised services and advice to involved farmers. The organisation also seeks to work with aggregators who take charge of the farmers will support in managing the farmers.

During the project implementation of the pilot phase of the project, 45 acres of farmland was cultivated for farming. The project encountered its own challenges during implementation.

The sustainability of the project is based on the migrants investing their remittances in the local farmers who are engaged in agricultural farming with the expectation of getting higher returns after crop project. More so, women and youth have a higher chance to increase their household

production as they are trained to go into commercial farming to enhance food security. With the use of improved farming technologies, we believe the farmers will be empowered and the harvest will increase than what is averagely produced on yearly basis. In addition to these, the project becomes sustainable as it engages the services of experts with diverse background. It will be under constant supervision and monitoring of project partners involved in the implementation and production process.

The project is very laudable because it supports in improving the livelihood of farmers. More so, the harvested maize crop was a good raw material as it was partly consumed by the farmers and partly sold to premium food factory. We believe that in spite of the many challenges which was encountered the pilot project has been successful and it needs to continue.

Currently it will be much easier than earlier if the whole process of implementation is to begin as the project has in place enough resources and labour at the grass root.

Hence, it is an important factor other partners and sponsors to come on board to support in project implementation. Presently AfroEuro Foundation along with its partners seeks potential stakeholders to join and support in funding and project implementation of the project. We encourage active partners who will support in promoting this project throughout the preliminary stage of project until its end.

Another important factor for consideration would be in creating more awareness among migrants in the Diaspora, not only in Netherlands but throughout Europe or beyond to encourage migrants to invest their remittances in the project. Other financial institutions that deal directly with migrants' remittances should also come in to promote the project. However, there is a need for research to determine specifically how all potential partners involved in the project can be linked to ensure a much smoother operation and functioning during project implementation.

Nonetheless, at the local level or in home countries, since it is a laudable project, local governments should come in to support migrants' contribution to ensure maximum success. More education and training should also be invested in enlighten the local farmers about the initiative to enhance their involvement and participation in the project.

## 1.0 Introduction

Food security tackles world extreme poverty by engaging the services of more farmers to increase production by enhancing their access to land, modern technology, building human capacity through agricultural systems. Food security prevents hunger and poverty. It enables more women and youth to be involved in the production process to enable them feed themselves, their families and the community at large.

The AfroEuro Food security Project evolved as a result of the implementation of the Migration and Development Program launched in January 2007 with motive of mobilizing and engaging African migrants in the Diaspora to support with development of their countries of origin. The food security project enables migrants to contribute towards agricultural development through contribution of their skill, knowledge, social network, physical capital and remittances.

During the implementation process, Ghana was selected as a case study for piloting. If successful, the idea of migrants supporting in agricultural production of their home countries would be implemented in other countries which have migrants based in the Diaspora. The project targets not only Ghanaian migrants in Netherlands, but also farmers in countries of origin such as Tamale, Kumasi, Wenchi and Kibi.

AfroEuro Foundation began the implementation of the food security project in December 2010. The project focuses on engaging migrants' services and encouraging migrants to play an active role in supporting Agricultural developmental projects in their countries of origin. The Food Security Project is set out to support small holder maize farmers to expand their farms by training them into engaging in commercial farming through the use of improved agricultural farming practices and improved technology to increase their productivity and enhance their incomes.

This paper contains a comprehensive overview the various activities which have been embarked on since implementation of the Food Security Project in December 2010. The paper also highlights the achievement and challenges which have been encountered in its implementation. Detail of financial expenses is also provided.

The report concludes that the Food Security Project is a laudable initiative as it seeks to reduce extreme form of poverty among poor farmers basically youth, women in Ghana while enabling migrants in the Diaspora to contribute towards the development process in home countries and in countries of origin as they invest their remittances in extensive agricultural projects.

We will now move on to discuss the basic aims and objectives for implementing the food security project in the next session.

## 1.2 Project Aims

- The basic aim of the food security project is to reduce poverty through the development of effective means of soybeans and maize production for youth and women. The project seeks to

enable women and youth acquire agricultural training and farming skills to be independent and improve their living standard.

- To provide micro credit and services to poorer farmers at the grass root.
- The project also seeks to increase women's economic empowerment through enhancing their access to land and credit.

### ***1.3 Project Objective***

The objective of the food security project is to encourage migrants in the Diaspora to enter into extensive agriculture by providing microcredit services and training to farmers through use of their remittance.

Remittances and capacity building is seen as key elements in the project for the development of country of origin by Ghanaian migrants. Migrants' micro credit facility is seen as a revolving fund with an interest rate of 10% financed by remittances of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands. The fund is stated after the pilot phase ends.

Also the project seeks to introduce local farmers to improved farming techniques and use of modern technologies to enhance their produce. We also seek to provide financial literacy training to local farmers on financial management and entrepreneurial skills.

### ***1.4 Target Group***

This project target African migrants in the Diaspora, specifically Ghanaians within Netherlands. The project is intended to develop the skills and entrepreneurial skills of young migrants to be actively involved and engaged in agricultural production in their country of origin. The project is also intended for women and youth at the local level engaged in farming and other agricultural inputs.

### ***1.5 Project Location***

The selected location for piloting is Buoko Wenchi in Ghana. A 100 acre plot of land was located to be used for farming in December 2010. Buoko was selected because the land leased from the Chiefs was a block-land.

Also unlike other parts of Ghana, Buoko-Wenchi has two farming seasons within a year which makes it very much suitable for farming. On this land, soy bean and maize was to be cultivated on rotation to enable the nutrients in the soil to be regained after each farming season.

## **2.0 Major Stakeholder involved in Project Implementation**

The stakeholders and partners that have been involved since the preliminary stage, initiation and implementation of the project have been:

- i. beneficiaries and target group,
- ii. project implementers,



iii. decision makers

iv. financiers

The project target group in the Netherlands includes migrant workers / professionals, entrepreneurs and student youths. Migrants are expected to support the project with their human and social resources through sharing their knowledge, skill and mobilising resources to promote development in their countries of origin. The intention is aimed at achieving three goals:

- i. Engage the Ghanaian migrant community towards leveraging remittances for the development of their local communities in Ghana
- ii. Create an environment through which Ghanaian community in the Netherlands identify investment opportunities in Ghana in the Agricultural sector
- iii. Create opportunities through which the Ghanaian migrants can source seed capital and possible investors in Ghana.

The final project beneficiaries and target group in Ghana include farmers, in the informal sector. The informal sector in selected community is made of largely actors in the agricultural sector. Falling commodity prices have forced many farmers off their farmlands, while traders' face stiff competition from imported goods selling at exorbitant prices. Even though there is a large agricultural cultivatable land, many of the local farmers lack tools and adequate equipment for cultivation. The intended beneficiaries are 100 women and 100 youth in Buoko, Wenchi in Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana. About 1000 men, 1200 women, 1600 children and 400 households will benefit indirectly from the support provided to the farmers.

The organisations in the South were started by AfroEuro Foundation as an effort to reach out to the local communities in eventually partnering with them in providing training and access to micro credits for the expansion of their businesses. The project implementers include organisations that support in the implementation of the Project while the financiers include all other migrant bodies and organisations that provide financial assistance for the implementation of the project. The table below outlines the major stakeholders who are involved in the project, their interest in the project and their level of influence in the project implementation.

Since December 2010, other potential partners were identified and added to enhance effective implementation of the project. These partners include Sefa and Jane, Advance, Premium foods among others. An agreement contract was signed with Sefa and Jane during this period in which they agreed to supply the farmers with agrochemical products and seeds for farming on commission basis and this will be paid to them.

The list below gives an update of all major stakeholders and partners of the Project and their specific tasks in project implementation.

- ***AfroEuro Foundation*** – organise migrants and farmers. Coordinates the Food security project and provides mechanised services for farmers. AfroEuro also serves as the aggregator as it assists in organising and registering farmers to be engaged in the project.

- **Abban Company Limited** – Provide ready market for farmers harvested maize crop. Abban is expected to assist in drying and storage of maize crop after harvesting.
- ***Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands*** – Provide financial support and use their knowledge to assist in the implementation of the project.
- ***Farmers in Buoko, Wenchi- Brono Ahafo Region*** – Farmers will work on the farm. They will receive professional training and advice on how to engage into commercial farming for maize and soybean production.
- ***Chief and Elders, Buoko Wenchi*** – They are the custodians of the land and they will lease their land for farming.
- ***Premuim Food*** Provide ready market for farmers harvested maize crop.
- ***Sefa and Jane*** Provides agrochemical products and services used for farming on commission basis.
- ***Advanced*** Support with the provision of the Agricultural officer who will give professional advice and consultative services to farmers and field officer.
- ***Oxfam Novib*** provided financial support
- ***Sinapi Aba*** To assist in giving financial literacy training to local farmers.

### 3.0 Organisational Capacity and Structure

The food security project combines the use of human resources and capacity as well as physical resources. Below is a list of combined resources that has been used for project implementation.

#### ***Human Resources***

Project Coordinator, Netherlands  
 Field Officer, Ghana  
 Project Consultants, Ghana and Netherlands  
 Project Partners in both Netherlands and Ghana  
 20 selected farmers Buoko- Wenchi (Brono Ahafo Region)

#### ***Physical Resources***

- Acquisition of an office space in Netherlands with 2 computers and 1 printer
- A 100 acre farm land in Buoko Wenchi
- 2 tractors
- 1 harrow
- 10 spare tyres for tractor



## 4.0 Project Implementation

When the project began in December 2010, some farming equipments were purchased from The Netherlands and transported to Ghana to be used for farming. The farming equipments purchased were two tractors, a harrow and 10 spare tyres.

Also an office space was secured in The Hague-Netherlands. In addition to this, for the project officer in Netherlands, two computers, 1 printer and 1 photo-copier were purchased.

Also in December 2010 the Project Coordinator in Netherlands embarked on a field trip to Ghana. The motives of embarking on this trip were to:

- To secure a 100 acre farm land, to be used for farming from community chiefs and elders of Buoko.
- Explore possibilities of project partners at the local level
- Registration, selection, recruitment and mobilization of 20 local farmers and field officers to work on the farm at the grass. The local officers recruited were the Field Officer, Agricultural Officer and Tractor driver.
- To organize intensive training section for selected field officers and local farmers to ensure a smooth take-off of the project. Two educative seminars were also planned for the farmers, the Agriculture officer and the field officer in Suyani. The purpose of this meeting was to enable all partners on the project to become acquainted on those working on the project and their specific roles during project implementation. The second seminar was to train the farmers on how to cultivate maize crops and soybean. They also received training on the best form of agrochemical products to be used during farming.
- Each farmer engaged in the farming was given a seed capital that was to be used in covering the cost of expenses spent on their farm. The seed capital varied among the farmers. Those with more plots of acres had more, while those with less plots received smaller micro credit services. This money was managed by the field officer; it was not handed over to the farmers. The money was to be used to cover cost of expenses each farmer incurred during their farming.

In January 2011, the Project Coordinator was still in Ghana. The purchased items transported from Netherlands were received at the Tema Harbour in Ghana. The received items were the tractor, tyres and harrows. These items were again transported to the Project site in Buoko-Wenchi. A tractor driver was recruited to drive the tractor.

Furthermore an agreement contract was signed agreement with Sefa and Jane who agree to provide agrochemical services to farmers on credit basis.

After the facilitation trip by the Project Coordinator from Ghana, the field Officer in Ghana became in charge and began supervising the project activities in Ghana. Under his supervision, the Filed

Officer ensured at least three times weekly visits to the project site and frequent collaboration with the Project coordinator in The Netherlands. The activities embarked upon by the Field officer were:

- Preparation of 100 acre plot of land. The 100 acres was cleared but only 45 acres could be used for farming for farming due to late timing.
- Uprooting smaller plants and leveraging the soil.
- Ploughing the land
- Provision of Agro-chemicals such as fertilizers, weedicides and insecticides to selected farmers.
- Seed procurement
- Division of 15 selected and trained farmers to the prepared 45 acres of land. Although 20 farmers were selected and trained previously, when the time came for planting, some farmers have already gone back to their own farms because the weeding was delayed. Also, initially it was agreed upon that each of the farmers will receive 5 acre plot of land to farm upon, when it came to the sharing of the land, some farmers received more while others received less land. This was based on the strength of each farmer, their commitment to be part of the project and their availability.
- Sowing of seeds- Planting was done in lines and spaced. Spacing and planting maize in lines enable the crops to grow well and encourage easier movement and monitoring into the farm.

The Agricultural Officer supported in training farmers on how to cultivate maize and soybean. He also visited the project location at least once every month to monitor the activities on the farm. He was also consulted whenever necessary to enable him give his advice and guidelines on the operational activities being implemented.

After the farmers had sown their maize seeds, an intensive workshop was organized for farmers. The theme for this workshop was to educate them on opportunities for micro credit services and the contribution migrants in the Diaspora are making through their remittance and a micro-credit package.

The farms were regularly visited by the field officer and farmers. Each farmer ensured that weeds were kept down to ensure the maize grow well. In all, preparation of land to planting lasted from February till May 2011. Farmers depended more on the rainy season.

Within Netherlands, periodic meetings were organized with major stakeholder (migrants) to access how they can contribute to the growth of the project.

Between August and September 2011, the project Coordinator went back to Ghana to inspect the progress of the project. Also team of monitoring and evaluation officers also visited the site to access progress being made.

### **Harvesting/ Drying**

In September 2011 some of the maize crops had matured and harvesting began. It took three weeks to harvest all maize crops and two days to dehusk it. The problem was because the planting was delayed; they missed the rainy season after planting, so the maize did not produce as much as was expected. Also at the point when harvesting began, the rain had then begun and had destroyed most crops harvested due to inadequate storage facility.

After harvesting, about 100 bags of maize were achieved from the 45 acres farmed land. Participation farmers were given maize bags to be used for subsistence for themselves and their families.

After the maize has been dehusked it was dried manually within 5 days due to lack of drying equipments.

Farmers then began calculation of their cost and services received as micro-credit. All deductions on investment cost and labour cost incurred was deducted. Migrants micro-credit services invested was 10 percent of total revenue received by the farmers. But since it was a pilot, not much yield was produced so the 10 percent profit was reduced to 5 percent.

Some farmers preferred they save some of their maize crops for household consumption, after deductions has been made while other farmers also preferred their produce were sold to ready buyers at the traders in Techiman market and Premium food Production.

## **5.0 Project Sustainability**

Even though this project is at the local and regional level, it does have an impact on the national economy especially in its expected impact on the unemployment level in among women and youth in Buoko-Wenchi.

In addition, the rate of irregular migration by youths in the region will be curbed. This would, in the long run, improve their participation in ensuring food security, planning and decision-making.

The food security project provided financial security and enhanced access to land to local women and youth farmers. It enabled poorer farmers to earn some income to support their children in school. Household also had access to maize crop which is a necessity for consumption. The youth involved in the project were able to gain employment also goes a long way in reducing irregular migration. It is expected that the workload of women will be reduced by 20% in the households in the operational region as well as reduce the rate of rural-urban migration by 40%. Once the pilot phase of the project is complemented and is successful, it is replicated in the other regions within Ghana and in other African countries

To make the project more sustainable, locally adapted efficient agricultural technologies was adapted with improved farming practicing. It also emerge new configuration of social capital where it builds relations and trust in partnership between institutions and human capital through leadership, ingenuity, managements and skills, given the capacity to innovate and experiment through its pilot

project since both human and social capital are able to innovate in the face of uncertainty. More so the project jointly with efforts of all stakeholders produces food crop maize and soya beans for farm families and markets. It delivers a unique non food functions that cannot be produced in other sectors such as urban to rural migration and social cohesion.

To make the project more sustainable, the project was on monitored and evaluated on by performance experts on quarterly basis. These experts monitored the internal operations of project with reference to activities, institutions and structures. Regular field reports were produced on monthly basis by the field officer.

More so, periodic meetings organised for all stake holders. This will give a platform to discuss activities and implementation plan for the interest of all while enhancing project productivity.

## 6.0 Challenges

- Change in project location. Initially it was planned that the project will be implemented in the Northern region of Ghana. However, it was very difficult to acquire even a 100 acre plot of land from the region. In view of this Buoko was selected. Buoko is a small community which constitutes majoring of poor households. The land acquired from Buoko is good for farming since it's is a 100 acre block of farmland.
- Higher financial investment in project. During the implementation of the project much money is being spent on project implementation. There are other expenses which emerge not included in the financial plan. For instance, shipping cost for the removal of purchased items from the harbor and transport cost of purchased items to project sites.
- Land Preparation: The land received during the first phase of the implementation process was 100 acres. Although getting access to a 100 acre virgin land was an advantage, we were met with some challenges.
- Delay in land preparation for farming due to inadequate labour. The farmers could not get use the tractors used for land preparation. There was low expertise at the local level.
- Some selected farmers who have already been trained for project implementation have also gone back to farm on their small plots of land. This will involve additional cost and cause a delay in the farming as the field officer will now have to look for more farmers to be trained to work on the farm.
- Unfavorable weather conditions (due to delayed planting) affected the crop yield.
- Lack of drying and storage facilities for the harvested maize crop.
- Several factors such as delayed planting which led to delayed harvesting and lack of adequate capital did not ensure farming in two seasons within the year. There was not enough capital to pay for the cost.

## 7.0 Achievements

20 local farmers in Wenchi were selected trained. When the time came for implementation, some farmers had gone back to their old farm lands due to the delay. Hence only 15 of these farmers were involved in the project implementation. The project engaged the services of youth, women and men in Wenchi.

More maize crop was produced than the yearly yield. There was increased household food consumption for people in Wenchi.

Acquisition of physical capital and human resources has possibility of ensure continuation of the project.

Value chain network has been built with all potential stakeholders. These stakeholders are much interested in investing their remittances to be used as micro-credit services for poorer farmers.

## 8.0 Conclusion

The Food Security Project seeks to reduce extreme form of poverty among poor farmers in Ghana. The project is a laudable initiative as it seeks to create jobs for poor farmers at the local level while engaging the services of youth, women and children.

The food security project encourages migrants in the Diaspora to contribute towards the development process in host countries and in countries of origin as they invest their remittances in extensive agricultural projects. The investment package is used as micro credit services for poorer farmers who work locally to support their household and improve their basic conditions of live.

The current project is a pilot project which began in December 2010. By October 2011, harvesting has been done and profits were redistributed to the poor farmers after cost incurred has been incurred. In all 100 bags of maize was achieved.

The project has successfully been implemented at the pilot stage. The challenge faced basically was limited financial capital and other necessary resources. However, a lot more needs to be done. Stakeholders should be actively engaged in the project.

So far the 15 farmers that were involved in the project have been trained. The project enhanced the production of maize to poor farmers in Buoko-Wenchi. Households had access to maize crop consumption. Farmers were also able to earn some amount of capital after profits has been redistributed.

This project is expected to be replicated in other regions if successful, within Ghana and in Africa. Interestingly selected farmers on this project do not need bulk capital to partake in the project.

Farmers were trained and their capacity developed through expert advice at the local level who engaged them on technological inputs and use advanced chemicals that yield more crop production in maize crop. Human resources and equipments were also provided for project implementation.

## 9.0 Recommendation

The food security project is a laudable initiative which has the potential to create jobs, better the livelihood of poorer farmers and enable migrants to contribute towards development of their home countries through the use of the remittances. The project encourages migrants in the Diaspora to invest their remittances in extensive agricultural projects in their home countries. The food security project seeks to bring a change.

The project can be successful and achieve a greater impact if well coordinated and all potential stakeholders in both host countries and countries of origin play their vital roles during project implementation. This is a value added and a value chain project; hence the role of each potential partner is very vital and can go a long way project success. Potential local partners in home countries such as Sinapi Aba, Aban Company Limited, Premium Foods, Advanced Company, among many others all need to play an active role during project implementation.

Also potential partners in host countries such as Money gram, Ria Money Transfer, Cordaid, needs to be actively involved in the value chain process to encourage migrants to invest their remittance in development projects as effort of reducing poverty and also as investment package to improve the livelihood of poorer farmers in countries of origin.

In addition to this, since the pilot project focused on Ghanaian migrants, it will be laudable to encourage all migrants across borders such as in Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, among many others and introduce the initiative to them. Different migrants' organizations can also join hands with AfroEuro Foundation to support the food security project and to encourage migrants in the Diaspora to use their remittances to invest in developmental projects in their countries of origin.

Moreover, at the local level, national governments and the Ministry of Agriculture come in to support and encourage the food security project initiative. Governments should encourage migrants and give them opportunities to grow as they invest their remittances in agriculture. Governments should make the operation of the project easily implementable in home countries.



## Appendix:

### *Some shared pictures on Project Implementation*





