

## WACDEP Ghana : Impacting people's live in Bawku Municipal, Binduri and Bongo Districts



The community in Adaboya on the identified land

### What is it about?

In Ghana, a demonstration project on water security and climate resilience is being undertaken within the Water Climate and Development Program (WACDEP) in Africa in the Upper East region. The field demonstrations are being implemented in selected communities namely Tampezua 2, Azum-Sapeliga and Adaboya in the Bawku municipal, Binduri and Bongo districts, respectively.

A primary component identified in all the communities of the field demonstration is ecosystem restoration through tree growing for sustainable land and water management and to mitigate climate change. Key technical support is drawn from government institutions/agencies such as Water Resources Commission, Forestry Services Division and the District Directorate of Agriculture. In consultation with community members, sites for buffer zones have been identified and

suitable trees planted. At Tampezua 2 and Azum-Sapeliga, efforts are on riverbank restoration of the White Volta River, a tributary to the Volta River while at Adaboya the community identified about one (1) hectare of land within the catchment of a reservoir to plant fruit trees. Community members have noted that the activity will curb the rampant degradation and siltation of their reservoir thereby increase the water retention capacity and by extension availability of water for agricultural activities.

Exhibiting a high sense of community participation in the field demonstration implementation, farmers have demonstrated commitment to the process using local materials and resources, constructing mud walls around the fruit trees and continuous watering of the plants during the dry season.

Government services are contributing to the implementation of the activities because it is part of their mandate included in the Government agenda at district level to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the populations.

As part of the implementation, the Forestry Service Division in charge of the Districts and the municipality, together with the communities, are expected to establish community nurseries for the supply of seedlings for planting along banks of the White Volta River.

About 50% of the population involved in the project are women who take part in meetings held at community level. The meeting turnover is very encouraging with high participation from men, women, opinion leaders, and youth.

### How is it done?

The strategic approach of WACDEP in Ghana spans beyond ecosystem restoration to focusing on livelihood support for communities all year round. Some of such component is the dry season farming and small ruminant support integrated into the ecosystem restoration. The provision of this support is strategic and very important to the livelihoods of the people in the communities. The implementation is also coupled with farm inputs support (seeds, irrigation equipment or tools) for dry season farming activities as a livelihood support. The farmers have been supported with vegetables seeds: onion, cabbage, okro and green pepper seeds for their dry season farming activities. It is worth recognizing that the provision of vegetable seeds support ultimately will lead to the planted trees for the riverbank restoration and catchment protection. This is further accompanied by other revenue generating activities like small ruminants breeding.

A five (5) kilometres length along the river was defined for the restoration intervention and to contribute to minimising the impacts of flooding in Tampezua and Azum-Sapelliga. However, the width of the buffer zone varies in terms of available land, ranging from 50m to 90m. In Adaboya the community has identified the need to protect the catchment area of their community reservoir with mango plantation with a target of covering an area of one hectare.

In consultation with the community members and landowners, a variety of tree species were considered including dichro, acacia, etc. (for stabilizing river banks) mango, mahogany, cashew etc. (for economic purposes). These trees will contribute to both the restoration of the ecosystems of the riverbanks and provide fruit that contribute to improving livelihood of farmers and reducing poverty.

With support from the District Department of Agriculture and Forestry Service Division, the communities have learned to organize themselves better and set up community monitoring teams; trained farmers on nursery establishment and maintenance, tree planting and protection techniques and are sensitised to create buffer zone in order to safeguard the lands for farming. Farmers were also trained on sustainable dry season farming and soil and water conservation techniques to introduce or build their capacities on best farming practices.

### What are the Benefits?

Trees are planted by farmers to restore the riverbanks. These trees will contribute to poverty reduction with fruits providing economic benefits as well as the dry season farming support, which will improve the livelihood and income of households in the communities. The trees are also expected to serve as barriers and contribute to reducing the negative impacts of annual flooding during the rainy seasons. The trees (buffer zone) are expected to improve water quality by contributing to trapping sediment and influence local climate. Diverse tree species planted possess medicinal properties and also provide building materials for the communities. Moreover the trees will provide feed (forage) for livestock.



A man in Tampizua 2 holding a seed planted in his farm

## Who are the Partners?

The stakeholders involved in the demonstration project are the District Assemblies, Water and sanitation services, Disaster management services, Community development, Forestry Services Division, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Water Resources Commission (WRC), local Chiefs, community leaders, land owners, Ghana Country Water Partnership (CWP-Ghana).

## What are the Results so far?

1. Discussions were held with community members to identify their problems and their desire to change them. The problems identified included the flooding of farmlands every year during the rainy season that leads to the destruction of crops. This has a great impact on living conditions of the communities. To improve the livelihoods a number of activities were suggested by the communities including livestock raising, dry season farming, water harvesting and tree planting.
2. Communities were better organized by setting up working groups according to categories of work areas identified. This makes the process participatory and totally owned by the population. Community Based organizations were also identified with the activity areas.
3. The communities are now aware that their bad farming practices is one of the factors behind silting of the river channel, reducing the water holding capacity leading to regular flooding, so people have expressed their readiness to accept change in order to overcome the bad effects of the phenomenon.
4. Government services are playing a leading role in the implementation of the demonstration projects since they were involved and given the central role since the beginning of the initiative.
5. Communities were trained on dry season farming techniques and soil and water conservation techniques. Through community engagement it has been revealed that communities have gained appreciable knowledge from both trainings, bringing to the fore indigenous knowledge and encouraging the practice of techniques such as the use of neem seed extract to control pest and diseases in nursery management and planting in rows instead of the local (broadcasting) way of planting.
6. About 160 grafted mangoes have been grown on a one hectare plot in Adaboya community as a catchment area protection and a total of 2,596 of different species mahogany (1458), cashew (600) and others (538) planted along the river banks in Tampezua.
7. A total of 49 males, 30 females and 30 males 33 females in Azum-Sapeliga and Tampezua communities, respectively have been supported with vegetable seeds for dry season farming.



A public fountain in Bongo providing water to the community

## What lessons so far?

- A. When working with communities, it should be made clear that what we promise is carried out according to discussions;
- B. Former experiences in the neighbourhoods are very important and discussions with beneficiaries should be made to learn from these experiences in order to avoid repeating the same errors;
- C. When the identification of needs is properly done, communities are likely to follow and get engaged when their needs and viewpoints are taken into account.
- D. It is important to fit in the government agenda when carrying out our activities. When this is done public structures can be the first support in the implementation of the development initiative.
- E. Field interventions have ensured unity and some level of contentment and commitment among farmers, women and the youth. This has been as a result of the various sensitization and training meetings which gave them the opportunity to interact and share ideas among themselves.
- F. The dry season farming aspect has encouraged the youth to return to the farming business.

## WACDEP

The WACDEP is a programme of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) operationalised by GWP with the aim of supporting a number of African countries to develop Country Water Security and Climate Resilience Investment Strategies, Plans and projects, and promote the integration of water security and climate resilience in national development plans. The programme was developed as response to the January 2009 AMCOW request for GWP to support the implementation of the 2008 African Union Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration on Water and Sanitation. In West Africa it is being implemented in Burkina Faso, Ghana at regional and transboundary level in partnership with Volta Basin Authority (VBA) and with Water Resources Coordination Center (WRCC)/ECOWAS.

Demonstration projects are part of the project's implementation to showcase a climate resilient development initiative at local level.

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