



Newsletter

S U S T A I N A B L E T R E E C R O P S P R O G R A M

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STCP strategizes to strengthen its research agenda

STCP's Technical Program Leader, Dr. Jim Gockowski has initiated a series of meetings with key partners in an effort to raise the platform of STCP's research agenda in the coming years. The purpose of these meetings was to garner support and get feedback from STCP's major stakeholders. Dr. Gockowski's mission took him to the United States of America, Nigeria, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire where he met with a cross section of private sector representatives and national partners.

Whilst in the USA, Dr. Gockowski spent three full days holding discussions with key representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), USAID and the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF).

STCP's proposed process for launching regional research activities involving IITA scientists integrated with West African regional networks was encouraged by all.

While in the USA, Dr. Gockowski toured the lab facilities of Dr. Mark Gultinan and Siela Maximova of the State College, Pennsylvania. Here, a wide range of topics were discussed with particular focus on two issues—somatic embryogenesis (SE) and the molecular biology of *Phytophthora megakarya*. In vitro propagation via SE provides a means for producing genetically identical and pathogen-free planting materials. Penn State has been a global leader in the SE of cocoa and has developed recent innovations in SE which promise to reduce the cost of SE clones significantly.

Upon returning to West Africa, Dr. Gockowski proceeded to Nigeria, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire to advance the implementation of the IITA-STCP research agenda where he met with IITA, CRIN, IRAD, Nestle, and CIRAD scientists. He also had opportunity to participate with SOCODEVI and Ivorian cooperative leaders to initiate a planning meeting with SOCODEVI to reintroduce grades and standards at the farmgate level in order to provide producer price incentive for improved quality of cocoa.

Already in Accra at STCP's Regional Office, a number of meetings have been held to map out some of the key elements of the genetic improvement thrust in West Africa and IITA's role relative to other stakeholders.

Hershey leadership visits STCP



Reported by:
Cynthia Prah (IITA/STCP)

Two Hershey representatives—Andy McCormick and John Long has met with a team of STCP staff and the Program Director of the Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP) Mballo Ndiaye. Discussions at the meeting, which was held at the offices of the STCP in Accra in November 2009 centered around STCP activities and intervention in cocoa growing communities in West Africa. Also discussed was the issue of certification and STCP's role.

The team was on a familiarization visit. They were accompanied by Patience Dapaah of the International Cocoa Initiative.



Reported by:
Cynthia Prah (IITA/STCP)

Jim Gockowski addressing the Hershey team

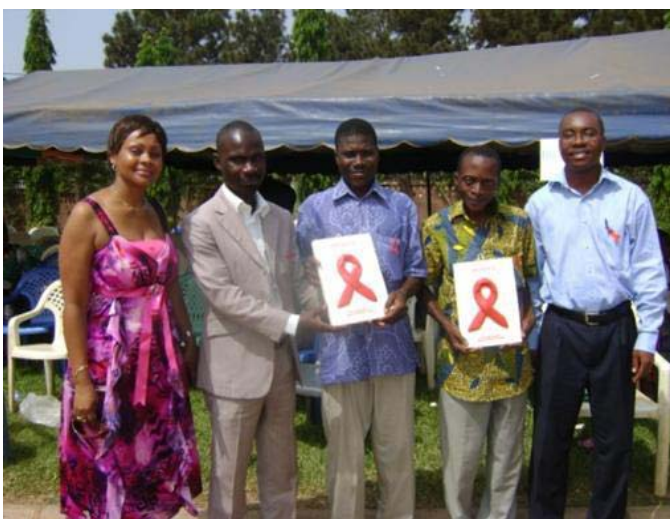
2 STCP farmer facilitators given a national award for sensitizing cocoa farmers on HIV/AIDS-related issues through the FFS

Two FFS farmer facilitators, M. Frébonne Koffi Noel and M. Ano Amoakon, have been honoured by the Governor of Abengourou, East of Cote d'Ivoire at a ceremony to mark the 2009 World Aids Day which fell on December 1. The two facilitators expressed their deepest gratitude to the Governor and people of Abengourou for recognizing their efforts at impacting knowledge on HIV/AIDS to cocoa farmers.



Frébonne receives his award from the official of the district of Abengourou

They said the award is an indicator of the good performance of the FFS approach developed by IITA-STCP. They added that since the introduction of these topics in the FFS, producers pay more attention to their hygiene as part of a way of life. They are more interested in the FFS training sessions because it gives them knowledge about their wellbeing. They can therefore apply the good agricultural practices learned during the FFS training sessions and improve their productivity as well as their incomes.



Frébonne & Amoakon showing off their certificates.

IITA-STCP has been training cocoa farmers in Abengourou on good agricultural practices through FFS since 2003. With the support of Family Health International, health issues such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and reproductive health were developed and added to training modules. Since last 2008, a total of 240 cocoa farmers have been trained on these topics in addition to ICPM and PRD techniques. Female and male condoms were distributed to the FFS participants and their families. During the farmer field days organized in two villages on the health topics, 197 farmers were voluntarily tested for HIV.



*Reported by:
Jean-Yves Couloud (IITA/
STCP)*

Conference to review iMPACT activities held in Accra

STCP-Ghana and STCP-Cote d'Ivoire in November 2009 participated in a conference to review the iMPACT program since its inception in 2008 in both countries and to plan ahead for a successful completion of the program in 2010. The conference brought together key implementing partners including STCP, IFESH, ICI, AFRICARE, RA and GTZ, and representatives from national and private institutions from both countries. These include representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Interior and the Ghana Cocoa Board.



Some participants at the opening of the conference

The iMPACT program targets 19 communities in Ghana and 7 communities in Cote d'Ivoire and the goal is to contribute to the development of cocoa farming in West Africa as a profitable, socially rewarding and environmentally sustainable livelihood for families and an attractive occupation for the coming generation through a multi-institutional, multi-sectorial public-private-partnership intervention.

iMPACT confab... cont. from pg 2

Ophelia Otoo of GTZ made an overview presentation on the iMPACT program for all technical partners in Ghana whilst Euphraisie Aka of STCP-Cote d'Ivoire presented for all the technical partners in Cote d'Ivoire. In a working group session, technical partners made detailed presentations on their achievements and challenges and how they intend to implement the last part of the program in 2010. They further discussed lessons learnt and opportunities in the coming year.



Ivorian official addresses the participants

At the end of the conference, it was evident that the iMPACT program has had a positive influence on the beneficiary communities in terms of improvement in cocoa yield and the sustainability of the environment among others.



*Reported by:
Ambrose Dziwormu (ITA/
STCP)*

EU official visits EU-CSSP II implementation communities

Already in its second year and the EU-funded CSSP II project is felt by farmers and chiefs and people of the project implementing communities. During his 3-day visit to some selected CSSP II beneficiary communities, the EC Desk Officer in charge of the project, John Stanley saw at first hand the positive effect of farmer training on farm practices.

At Bekwai Municipal, Mr. Stanley visited FFS participant's farm and a farmer learning group (FLG) plot where FFS participants were receiving training on planting, replanting and diversification (PRD). The delegation continued to a replanted cocoa farm. Data was collected on farmer practice

plots, ICPM/Q only plot and a confined Fertilizer and ICPM/Q plot for comparison. It was noticed that there are more losses (pods were infected with blackpod disease) on farmer practice plots than the two other trial plots because of bad agronomic practices on the farmer practice plots.



John Stanley breaks a pod

Still at Bekwai Municipal, the chief, elders, FFS beneficiaries and farmers held a durbar in honour of the EC program officer to thank the EU for supporting the cocoa sector of Ghana. For the first time at New Edubiase area, John Stanley joined and participated in a video viewing club (VVC) session. He also visited another newly planted cocoa farm belonging to a trained FFS participant. Here one could obviously see the integration of food crops (cassava, cocoyam, plantain) with timber tree (*Terminalia superba*) seedlings and cocoa seedlings. The food crops are planted at a distance from the cocoa seedlings to provide temporary shade for the cocoa seedlings. This ensures that the cocoa seedlings do not die from desiccation in the dry season. After two or three years, the food crops are eliminated from the farm and the timber trees then become the source of permanent shade for the cocoa trees. Before the cocoa starts bearing, the farmer will have benefited from alternative sources of income.



Farmers at work to get clean cocoa pods

EU official visits... cont. from pg 3

Still in New Edubiase area, John Stanley met some FFS participants and interacted with them saying beneficiaries of the program must take what they learn seriously in order to improve cocoa quality and yields.

He later visited Ghana Cocobod's seed production unit (SPU) at Jamase from where IITA-STCP facilitated the supply of cocoa seedlings to FFS and VVC beneficiary farmers



Reported by:

Ambrose Dziwornu (STCP/IITA)

CLP technical planning meeting & more.

STCP has taken part in a three-day technical planning meeting on the Cocoa Livelihoods Program, a program funded by the BMGF and the World Cocoa Foundation. The STCP team joined other technical partners to discuss key programmatic concerns and identify opportunities for collaboration. The STCP's team consisted of all the STCP Country Managers from Liberia, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Cameroon, the Coordinator of the Performance Monitoring Coordination Unit, the Program Technical Leader and the Program Manager.

Meanwhile, the Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP) has been officially launched in Cote d'Ivoire at a ceremony held in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan. In attendance were officials from the country's cocoa sector institutions. The program is expected to be launched in Cameroon in April 2010.

The CLP is a 5-year regional program focusing on approximately 200,000 households reaching a total of 1.6 million people in the cocoa producing regions of Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria. It seeks to increase production of quality cocoa and improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers.



Earlier in the week, STCP held a one-day management meeting to review its plan of action in the coming months and leading to the next Executive Committee meeting scheduled to take place in Cameroon in April 2010. Issues on the agenda included STCP's research agenda and the revision of its reporting and presentation formats. At the end of the meeting, which was attended by nearly all of STCP's IRS and Country Managers across the five STCP-operating countries, participants were enthusiastic and looked forward to a more pro-active approach to work and to strengthen the research agenda of the program.



Reported by:

Cynthia Prah (IITA/STCP)

John Casey addresses STCP Management

OSH training provided to farmers and health workers

Twenty FFS facilitators trained on occupational safety and health (OSH) in cocoa production have expressed their appreciation to STCP for the training on health, economic and social consequences of hazardous practices on cocoa farms. The facilitators went through a 4-day training of trainers workshop on OSH held in Abengourou, East of Cote d'Ivoire from November 22-26, 2009. These facilitators are expected to train FFS participants on OSH-related topics with the goal of reducing farm injuries. They came from the national extension agency, ANADER, two NGOs, namely INADES and BFCD, four cooperatives (Coopakra, Yeyobie, Camene and Scagbo) and from Soubré farming community.

OSH training... cont. from pg 4

It is a well known fact that farming activities such as weeding, pesticides use and carrying heavy loads can be harmful to farmers when they are not done properly.



Transferring the injured demonstrated

The workshop was facilitated by Dr Kuyo Abel Gbelia, a consultant involved in the OSH project. Topics covered in the ToT workshop include hazards related to farming tools, carrying and lifting loads, repetitive strain injuries, poor posture, agrochemical hazards, hazards in the environment, vulnerable people and farming emergencies. Participants were later taken through discussion and practical sessions to allow them to fully understand the safety measures required during farming practice. The OSH training materials were developed by OSH specialists and Dr. Sonii David, STCP's Regional Extension Specialist.

The OSH project implemented by STCP is funded by the Swedish Chocolate, Confectionery and Biscuit Manufacturers' Association (CHOKOFA).



Group photo of participants



Reported by:
Jean-Yves Colloud (IITA/STCP)

FLG nurseries take shape in yr 1 in CLP-selected communities

Farmers benefiting from STCP-facilitated nursery activities in Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions in Ghana have expressed gratitude to STCP for its role in ensuring the distribution of cocoa pods and seedlings. The farmers claim that it would have been more difficult and expensive for individual farmers to organize planting material distribution on their own.



New cocoa nursery

A monitoring visit conducted recently to Planting, Replanting and Diversification (PRD) plots in some CLP-selected communities in the two regions shows farmers' preparedness and willingness to improve their planting materials through the establishment and proper management of the nurseries.

To demonstrate their commitment to ensuring the success of this exercise, Seidi, one of the communities in the Ashanti region, donated a bottle of "Akatemaster"

CLP nurseries... cont. on pg 7



Dr. Victor Afari-Sefa, STCP's M&E and Impact Associate inspected one of the nurseries.

Carbon storage in cocoa agroforest at the peri-urban area of South-western Cameroon: an opportunity to mitigate climate change

By:

Nathalie S. EYOHO EWANE, Denis J. SONWA, Stephan F. WEISE & Bernard. A. NKONGMENECK₂

Carbon stocks assessment in different forestry or agroforestry land uses, offers possibilities of knowing their potential in climate change mitigation program. These assessments can give opportunities to use these forest/ agroforest lands within the framework of the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) and REDD ("Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation"). Cocoa agroforest, such as the one found in South West Cameroon, could store important quantity of carbon beside their main function of producing cocoa and provide livelihood to farmer. In Cameroon, many studies on carbon stock have been carried out in the Center and Southern Cameroon (Zapfack et al.. 2002; Sonwa 2004).

The south-western Cameroon is the youngest and the most fruitful cocoa basin, and is an ecological zone with diverse characteristics compared with those of the Center and South. A cocoa agroforest in this part of Cameroon presents cocoa trees and associated plants including timber trees, fruit trees and medicinal plants. This study evaluates carbon stocks in the cocoa agroforests at the periphery of Kumba, the principal town of the cocoa agroforest in south-western Cameroon.

10 cocoa agroforests in total were chosen according to their age (0-25 years, 26-40, and 40 years above). In each cocoa agroforest, 4 quadrants of 25 m x 25 m were measured and the DBH of all trees above or equal to 2.5 cm (Sonwa, 2004) were listed and identified using Vivien and Faure (1986) and with the assistance of an advisor, resident of the village. The species which could not be identified on the spot were collected, treated and carried to the Systematic Ecology Laboratory of University of Yaounde I. The biomass of forest/fruit trees is evaluated using Brown et al. (1997) allometric formula. The biomass of Musaceae is evaluated according to the Arifin formula (2001). The biomass of palm trees (Arecaceae) were measured using Frangi and Lugo (1985). Conversion to carbon stock was done using the recommendation from Nolte and Al. (2001).

On average, cocoa agroforest around Kumba stores 74 tC/ha. In agroforest, the main plant is cocoa tree which stores 53% of this quantity. Associated trees store 47%. Within associated plants, timber trees, edible (fruit trees) and other plants including medicinal trees store respectively 45, 41 and 14%. Timber stores about half of carbon of the associated plants. These associated species in addition to the carbon stock have other socio-economic and ecological functions. And their presence offers opportunities to explore their role and contributions in the REDD+ (The new REDD concept that is now trying to avoid deforestation associating it with the forest conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of carbon storage).

From the above observation, it is significant to diversify a cacao farm because in addition to serving as an opportunity to mitigate damage from the climate, diversification can also provide alternate income through the production of non-forest timber products, firewood and medicinal values from some medicinal plants. In essence, diversification would improve the livelihood of smallholder farmers. However to integrate these in the mitigation programs, it would be necessary to:

1. Take into account the carbon market (mainly in the CDM and the REDD);
2. Develop sustainable mechanisms for the management of the multispecific systems;
3. Develop approaches to remunerate the smallholder farmers for their environmental services (carbon, biodiversity maintenance, etc).

The lead author, Nathalie S. Eyoho Ewane is with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture's Sustainable Tree Crops Program in Cameroon.

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CLP nurseries... cont. from pg 5

insecticide to his group for possible insect control on the Farmer Learning Group (FLG) nursery. The farmers were also enthusiastic about the fact that they could take advantage of scale economies by utilizing exchange labour on their individual farms during field preparation and transplanting – practices that are time consuming and expensive should farmers decide to use family labour or hired labour.

Between September and December 2009, the STCP facilitated the provision of poly bags and hybrid cocoa pods to some trained farmers and farmer groups to enable them establish nurseries within the first year of the CLP. The visit was therefore to assess the progress of work so far and to identify possible challenges associated with the established PRD nurseries. The visit was also an opportunity to obtain feedback from STCP field staff and backstop them as they prepare to sensitize communities for year 2 program beneficiaries due to commence in March 2010.

STCP- Ghana RELOCATES AS IT EXPANDS ITS AREAS OF OPERATIONS

The Sustainable Tree Crops Program of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture office in Accra, Ghana has moved to a new location. The office no longer operates from the TechnoServe Office in Airport Residential Area. The new office is located at No. 18 Okine Street in East Legon, a quiet residential neighbourhood of Accra. The move was necessitated by the growing number of staff as a result of the increase in the number of activities/projects being carried out by the STCP.

In the last two years, the STCP has more than doubled its areas of operations in the five countries in which it currently operates. The number of staff in Ghana alone has increased and continues to increase.

Meanwhile, Josephson Odamtten has joined the program since November 1, 2009 as the Database Management Analyst of the Performance Monitoring Coordination Unit of the Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP).

Josephson has a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Leicester, Management Centre and a Diploma in Data Process from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. He has over 17 years managerial working experience in Information Systems (IS) and has worked with a number of reputable national and international organizations including Amicus Onlus International's information systems, the Danish International Development Agency's Health Sector Support Office (DANIDA HSSO) and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).



The front view of the new office



Josephson at work



CONTACT:

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Edition and layout by Cynthia Prah
Website: www.treecrops.org
E-mail: stcp-wca@cgiar.org

Tel.: (+231) 21 763 675/773 873 Fax: (+231) 21 772 789

Mail: STCP Regional Office, Accra c/o IITA, L.W. Lambourn & Co., Carolyn House, 26 Dingwall Rd, Croydon CR9 3EE, England

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