

Sustainable Tree Crops Program – Cameroon



Project Dates: Pilot Phase 2003-2006, Phase II: 2007-2011

Country: Cameroon

Funders: US Agency for International Development (USAID), World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and global cocoa industry, US Department of Agriculture, Cocoa Buffer Fund of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)

Implementers: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (manager, production, marketing, policy), SOCODEVI (cooperative development), RIAS (Rabobank)

Overview

The “Tree Crop Production, Marketing and Livelihoods Project” focuses on the development of mechanisms for marketing and trade, processing of products, and productivity, as well as the building of institutional capacity. The project is active in the Center and South West Provinces. The UpCocoa project focuses on increasing the capacity of cocoa farmers and their organizations to create professional, sustainable cocoa businesses. UpCocoa will initially work with 8 cooperatives with a total of 1,600 farmers in the Center Province.

Program objectives:

- To increase rural income in an environmentally and socially responsible manner
- To promote policy, marketing, processing and production of two tree crops - cocoa and oil palm
- To assist farmers in the diversification of their sources of income
- To promote the production and marketing of cocoa and oil palm by-products and associated products such as plantain and non-timber forest products
- To develop farmer organizations’ capacity as agribusinesses and agricultural enterprises
- To develop local institutional capacity to provide production and marketing support services

Progress to Date:

- **3,200 farmers trained through Farmer Field Schools.** Farmers receive training through the participatory Farmer Field School approach which covers topics related to integrated crop and pest management as well as quality improvement. To date, 242 facilitators representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), 12 farmer cooperatives and two cocoa-related organizations completed training. An additional 9,000 farmers benefited indirectly through farmer-to-farmer dissemination of information.
- **Sustainable farmer cooperative-led seedling production & distribution system developed.** Experts from the National Agricultural Research Institute for Development (IRAD) provide technical supervision while STCP facilitates, leads data collection, and provides basic nursery materials. To date, about 27,000 improved cocoa pods (695 ha) and 147,000 pre-germinated oil palm nuts (917 ha) were provided to the cooperatives, while 20 propagator units were built for banana/plantain. A total of 600,000 suckers were sold to MINADER’s banana plantain project. Cooperative technicians were trained in management of cocoa nurseries (64 people), oil palm nurseries (70 people) and banana/plantain propagation (103 people). Participating cooperatives have established seed funds and linkages to production centers for purchase of cocoa, oil palm, banana plantain and fruit seedlings.
- **10 local NGOs and public structures increased capacity of 12 cooperatives.** SOCODEVI’s pilot project trained 10 local non-governmental organizations and public entities to assist farmers in developing cooperatives. All are providing the following services to their members: supplying improved planting material, training on production best practices, and marketing of products. Managers and accountants for each cooperative are participating in a training program, and all cooperatives have opened accounts at a micro-finance institution. The cooperatives are also connected to a new market information system called SIF. An additional 50 farmer groups have benefited from the project.
- **Research highlights.** STCP, IRAD and the National Forestry Agency (ANAFOR) are studying a farmer-developed cocoa agroforest model with 625 cocoa trees per hectare and 100 associated trees in Center Province. Biological control candidates against black pod disease have been

isolated and participatory field trials are underway; preliminary results show a 30-50% decrease in disease levels.

STCP-Cameroon: Ensuring a Future in Cocoa Farming

Mr. Joseph Pierre Modo (far left in picture below) is a 50 year old cocoa farmer who lives in the village of Mbakomo. The son of a teacher and a princess of the Ekouda chieftancy, he has had an interesting career. As a child, his family moved frequently due to the requirements of his father's position in the civil service.

After high school, he intended to follow in his father's footsteps and completed his teacher training in 1971. After teaching for several years, he had the opportunity to live in France where he earned a degree in insurance.

He returned to Cameroon in 1989, and worked as a senior staff member at an insurance company. After nearly 10 years with the company, he lost his job and was forced to return to his village.

“I kept asking myself ‘what am I going to do?’ I realized that courage alone was no longer sufficient, it was necessary to be involved in an activity,” he recalls. At that time, his parents had established a farm in the village and suggested that he pursue farming as well. He visited the Agriculture Services office in his village and received some technical sheets on the cultivation of annual crops such as cassava, banana and plantain.



In June 2003, his father died suddenly just as a Farmer Field School was beginning in the village. When Mr. Modo inherited his father's 10 hectare cocoa farm, he recognized the importance of learning to maintain and improve the farm and decided to enroll in the Farmer Field School.

Without the training, he does not think he would have been fully prepared to manage his father's cocoa farm.

“The establishment of such a school is very necessary because it helps participants to know about all the various tools required to cultivate effectively and at the same time it

helps farmers to modernize their cocoa cultivation practices as a whole,” he says.

Mr. Modo continues, ***“The most difficult aspect is the rigorous application of the lessons taught on the cocoa farm. With determination burning in me, I shall be in a position to put into practice the methods and techniques learnt from our excellent resource person.”***

After facing many challenges in his life, Mr. Modo believes that the training he received from the STCP Farmer Field School has given him the skills he needs to succeed.

For more information on the Sustainable Tree Crops Program, contact:

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