

Voices from the Field
Special Edition



Sasakawa
Africa
Association





ABOUT SASAKAWA AFRICA ASSOCIATION

Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) was founded in 1986 in Geneva as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) by Mr Ryoichi Sasakawa, Founder of The Nippon Foundation, as it is known today; Dr Norman E Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; and President Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States of America. SAA was originally operated as Global 2000 through a joint venture with the Carter Center of Atlanta, Georgia (USA), which became Sasakawa-Global 2000 (SG 2000) in 1988. Funding for SAA comes principally from The Nippon Foundation, led by Chairman Mr Yohei

Sasakawa. SG 2000 is still widely used to describe SAA country programmes.

In 2017 SAA became a general incorporated foundation in Japan, and in 2018 the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) programme was incorporated into SAA, providing leadership in building the human resource capacity of mid-career extension agents.

SAA currently concentrates its field operations in four countries: Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, and Uganda. In addition to these four countries, the SAFE programme also operates in Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, Malawi, and Tanzania.



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Voices from the Field: Ethiopia



AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES TRANSFORMED MY LIFE

Farmer Bashir Lemma is from Lalonora Kebele of Begi Woreda in Western Wolega zone, Ethiopia. He is an award winning farmer and father of seven. Bashir said: "Since I began using farming technologies introduced by the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA), my quality of life has improved. One year after adopting improved seed varieties and a line sowing method, I began harvesting significantly higher yields." Bashir left education 23 years ago at grade eight, aged 14. He remarked, "Thanks to the technologies brought in by SAA, in collaboration with local extension workers, my life has become easier. This gave me the opportunity to resume my education as a seventh grader in 2013. Now I am in grade 10 with my children, preparing to sit the national exam. I have also built a house. Put simply, implementing these technologies has transformed the lives of me and my family". Misgana Mejor also lives in Lalonora Kebele. She chairs a group of 30 female members called "Women Assisted Demonstration" (WAD). She said: "It is a targeted program to benefit women. SAA introduced us to the scheme by holding a series of meetings involving the whole community, including our husbands,

to create awareness of the opportunities for women to own their own plots of land on which to carry out the WAD program. The program has been empowering, as now we are managing plots of land on our own. Local extension workers and SAA staff visit regularly to provide us with new technologies and techniques, such as line-sowing, use of compost and effective seed selection. By following this advice and listening to development workers, our group has benefited. Our production has increased to 16 or 17 quintals from two or three on the same plot of land because of the technologies". Likewise, in Amba Kebele of Bambasi Woreda, Benishangul Gumuz regional state, women have benefited from the WAD program. Marema Begna is one beneficiary who participated in this scheme. She said: "In my neighborhood we have improved our lives using agricultural technologies in accordance with the advice of the extension experts. I am able to send all my children to school; I built a new house last year. This year, since my maize farm is giving by far a better yield, I am expecting to sell my produce for more than 50,000 birr (more than 2000 USD)".



Bashir Lemma is from Lalonora Kebele of Begi Woreda in Western Wolega zone, Ethiopia. He is an award winning farmer and father of seven.

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

28 year-old-single mother of three, Yiftusira Ashenef, is a host farmer of a 0.1 acre Community Demonstration Plot (CDP) in Wikma village of Gol Wikma Kebele, Enarj Enawga Woreda, East Gojam Zone, Amhara region of Ethiopia. She received training at a farmer training center (FTC) organized for 30 members of farmer groups. Five of the participants were women. She first received training in agronomic practices like soil management, line planting, spacing, weeding, and post-harvest handling, as well as training on group dynamics, duties and responsibilities. She stood out as a model farmer among all the participants.

In Ethiopia, the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) organized the Com-

munity Demonstration Plot-Women Assisted Demonstration (CDP-WAD) in the village by selecting, tasting, and duplicating the latest wheat variety of seed named "Kingbird". This was released by the Ethiopian Institute for Agricultural Research (EIAR), with the aim of increasing production and productivity. The group received seed and fertilizer. The problem of a lack of crop variety had been acutely felt in the village, who were struggling to increase their productivity in growing wheat, the area's agricultural mainstay, along with Teff – another staple crop. Once SAA conducted the demonstration and testing, the host farmers took over and expanded their plot, multiplying their seeds. Since Yiftusira's training, farmers

from her village and the surrounding region flock to her site to either buy her seeds or exchange them for other crops. Yiftusira generally receives twice the volume of Teff to her Kingbird wheat in these traes, such is its quality. Yiftusira said: "The wheat seed we used to buy in the market contained tare (*Lolium temulentum*), which would affect the growth and the quality of the crop. I have the best variety now, and I work meticulously in my plot so that no hybrid will get in the way. I don't even want to receive the seed for free from now on. Having seen the results, I will gladly pay for it."



Yiftusira Ashenef, mother of three is a host farmer on a Community Demonstration Plot (CDP) in Wikma village of Gol Wikma Kebele, Amhara region of Ethiopia.



Weinshet is from western Ethiopia. She has benefited from the Farmer Based Organization (FBO) project. She is engaged in small scale livestock fattening and poultry.

EMPOWERING GROUP WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Sashemene Association of Persons Affected by Leprosy is supported by the Nippon Foundation, and the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education supervised Farmer Based Organization (FBO) as part of the initiative and rationale behind cooperation and selection of user friendly agricultural enterprises for FBO members with special needs. In Kuyera, located just north of the main Shashemene town some 260 km south of the Ethiopian capital, this association had been granted 1.5 acres of land by the municipality way before SAFE Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) program got in touch with them in mid-2015.

The association benefited from of a grant of 186,000 birr (then around 9,300 USD) as part of the FBOs revolving fund scheme. They had already been running livestock fattening and apiary as their area of interest taking into account that it is also an activity not rigorous to the physical conditions of leprosy patients.

According to its chairman Demise Derso, the association long faced technical and organizational gaps until FBO project intervened. He

said: "Even if we were established, secured the land and office in 1998, we only entered into activities to support our members and generate income in 2008. Yes,

we have long had other external and local allies mainly through our national association. Yet, it is only since Sasakawa came that we have made a tremendous progress. First, Sasakawa injected finance in the form of revolving fund for our fattening venture. In addition, FBO project trained us on technical capacity building like selection of breed, feeding techniques, feed preparation, etc. It also injected finance to our apiary project, maintaining and upgrading as well our apiary house. Our members have also been given `Training on Apiary Enterprise`. The third was credit or revolving loan scheme with initial amount of 50,000 birr (US\$2200). This has enabled our members engaged in farming to have loan access and start up a profitable enterprise."

One member who has benefited from such a revolving loan scheme is Weinshet Urgessa. Weinshet came to Kuyera for medical treat-

ment from Ambo town in Central Western Ethiopia when she realized her ailment was leprosy. But once in Kuyera where there is the main specialized center of the country for the disease, she had already made up her mind that she would not go back to her place of birth and upbringing because of all the negative stereotypes and stigma associated with leprosy. Weinshet now calls the Kuyera village in the outskirts of Shashemene home, and happily married with two children. The young mother lives next to her farm where she is engaged in two small enterprises thanks to the revolving fund scheme she was able to access from FBOs project. She is engaged in small scale livestock fattening and poultry. Interestingly, she uses the disposable output from her additional trade of distillery of the traditional liquor "areke" as a source of feed for the fattening. Weinshet now leads a stable life, saying: "I call this home sweet home, forgetting even whether I grew up or lived elsewhere ever before."

NOT ONE BEAN LOST-SOMETHING WE NEVER THOUGHT WOULD BE POSSIBLE

Grain storage loss to insects is a major challenge for smallholder farmers, at times estimated to be at least 20 percent for major crops such as corn and common beans. Without crop-saving bags, farmers need to sell their crops soon after harvest or use insecticides which are not necessarily effective or may not be safe because of improper use.

Ethiopian farmers, as in many other African countries, store their grains in traditional storage facilities constructed from mud, clay, dung, and plant materials or mixtures of these. Cognizant of the challenges of post-harvest losses and with the aim of addressing the problems faced by the farmers during storage, Sasakawa Global-2000 in collaboration with Development and Extension Agents of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR) who work directly with farmers, started implementing a program to reach 3155 villages to introduce and disseminate PICS3 bags for a year from September 2015.

In June 2016, Farmers Field Days Open-the-bag ceremonies (OBC) were held in Hawassa Zuraya Woreda, Sidama Zone, SNNPR, and in Tigray Region, Central Zone Tahtay Maychew Woreda, Mayberaziyo Kebele. It was witnessed different crops: maize, beans, sorghum, rice were kept

in PICS bags by host farmers for 6 months and no insects were found after 6 months of storage; the grains maintained their original quality.

Abadi Redahegn is a farmer from Tahtay Maychew, said he and fellow farmers are "primarily saved

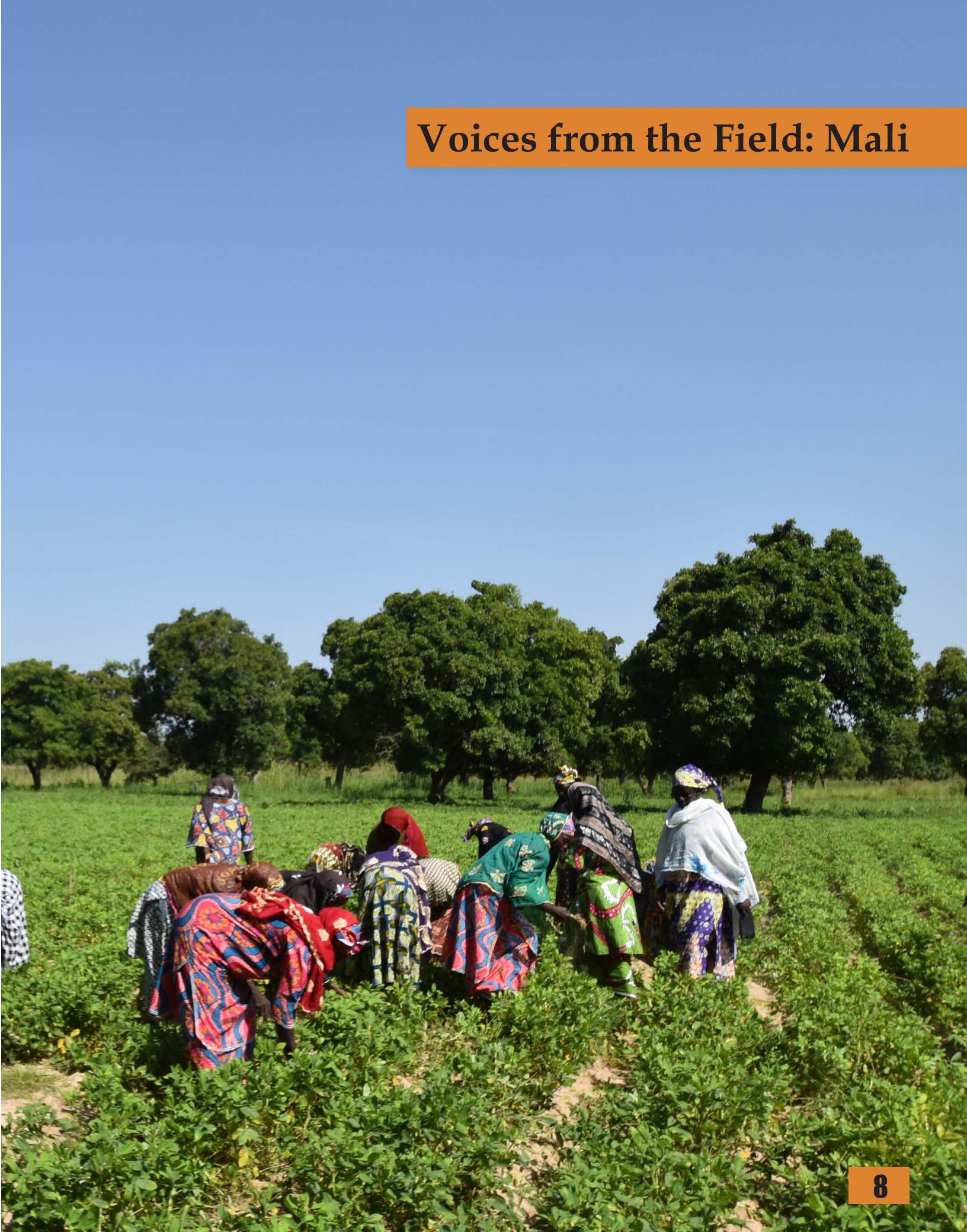


Abadi Redahegn is a farmer from Tahtay Maychew, Northern Ethiopia. He uses PICS bags which enabled him to protect his produce from insects.

from pests and we no longer apply chemicals before storage. To understand this, one had to see the loss we used to see with each single beans and peas attacked by pests. The loss could count half of the harvest. Our joy is two folds: thanks to these bags, the grains have maintained their quality 100%, and secondly it is chemical-free. At the beginning of the trials, we hesitated to adopt the technology saying: 'Isn't it strange using one outer sack and two inner bags to store grains?' . We opened them after two months, not one bean lost, and the same after four months. We thank Sasakawa for the intervention that we use these bags, something we never thought would be possible. All of us in the farmers' network here access these bags."

Purdue University of Indiana, USA, received a \$10 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop a program that will put the crop-saving bags into the hands of more farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa countries to improve their food security and income. It is called PICS, Purdue Improved Crop Storage. PICS is a simple, proven technology that has helped millions of African farmers dramatically reduce their storage losses. The hermetic triple bagging - a chemical-free storage method - enables farmers to store a variety of major crops for more than one year after harvest. The technology helps improve food availability and increase income of smallholder farmers. When using PICS bags, farmers no longer need chemicals to control grain storage pests.

Voices from the Field: Mali



TODAY WE ARE ABLE TO PRODUCE HIGH QUALITY RICE



Fatoumata Sangaré is Secretary of Finance in a Rice Platform of Women Group of Niéna which is situated in the rural commune of Niéna, in Sikasso region. Mali.

The Rice Platform of Women Group of Niéna is situated in the rural commune of Niéna, cercle of Sikasso, in Sikasso region. The platform was formed in 2014 and currently comprises 11 villages and 556 members. The main activities of the Platform are upland and lowland rice production, parboiling, storage and marketing of rice. Fatoumata Sangaré is the Platform's Secretary of Finance. According to Fatoumata, "Our platform is composed of 14 women groups and Sasakawa is involved in various ways in all of these groups. Thanks to Sasakawa's intervention, today we are able to

produce high quality rice. Our partnership with SAA has enabled us, through training and supervision, to produce and sell a range of good quality products. We have learned that 'quality' starts right here in the field. In terms of postharvest activities, we all want to express our thanks to SAA for getting us a rice decorticator and sorting machine. We now produce top quality rice that fetches the highest market value. Moreover, ten groups in our Platform have benefited from a month long adult literacy program with the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills like reading

and writing. Before Sasakawa's arrival, we had one notebook for all the details and information of the Platform's activities. Because of the training provided by SAA, we now manage different activities in separate notebooks. Now our technical record keeping and bookkeeping is of an excellent standard. Finally, good governance and transparency has become the hallmark of our Platform, which we owe to SAA's training and guidance. We are very humble and thankful for all the progress that has been made and for the work that continues to be done."

DEVELOPMENT IS A CHAIN

Seydou Sidibé is a community based facilitator (CBF) at a Farmer Learning Platform (FLP) and inputs shop in Boidié, a rural commune in the Cercle of Barouéli in the Ségou Region of southern-central Mali. Sidibé said: "I am the intermediary and facilitator between the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) in Mali and the village community. SAA is very important in Boidié because of the volume of work they do here. When SAA came

in, they showed us the benefits of micro dosing fertilizer technology through demonstrations in the field. This technology is affordable and allows us to maximize our investment due to the precise quantities of fertilizer we apply. It increased our profits and improved our millet and sorghum grain yield. SAA is the first NGO to involve us in so many activities, guiding the community through the Post-harvest, Training and Commercialization Center

(PHTC) on the way to sustainable agriculture; all the facilities here are the product of Sasakawa's work. Encouraged by the success of SAA, other NGOs have now partnered with them. By following their example, these partners add their own value, collaborate with the village community and help change lives. Development is a chain: SAA has started it and others have joined. We are proud to be part of that process."



Seydou Sidibé is a community based facilitator (CBF) at a Farmer Learning Platform (FLP) and inputs shop in Boidié, a rural commune in the Cercle of Barouéli in the Ségou Region, Mali. He improved his productivity thanks to technologists introduced by Sasakawa Africa Association in his village.



The Loudjouraton group of Molodo is a Farmer Organization (FO) of persons with special needs. The group produces rice, onions and shallots.

“WE ARE PRODUCTIVE”

Molodo is a village and seat of the commune of Kala Siguida in the Ségou Region of southern-central Mali. The Loudjouraton group of Molodo is a Farmer Organization (FO) of persons with special needs. The organization was established in 2015 by 11 members, and had grown to 32 in 2017; including four women and six children. The group produces rice, onions and shallots. The members work under the supervision of SAFE, the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education, with whom the FO has been able to acquire a rich cultivator and a rice huller, with a capacity of 36 bags of 100 kg per hour. Between 2015 and 2017, the total area sown

by the group increased from 20 to 100 hectares. Yields have also increased from 4 to 6 tons per hectare. As a result of increased yields and efficiency, the FO members are able to fully repay the credit obtained for inputs input, and they are also able to make money for savings by providing tiller and shell-er services. In addition, their sales revenue allows members to access micro credit on the basis of trust. The FO is chaired by Mr. Fily Diarra. He said: “Our members benefited greatly from SAFE’s training sessions: training in good agronomic practices of rice growing, as well as fish-ery and enterprise management, among others. Because not all our

local dishes are rich in vitamins, we have also been given training in how to prepare nutrient rich foods. In general, SAFE has provided us with all the important tools. Finally, in addition to taking leadership sessions, we are now members of the Apex Organization in the Ségou region and at the national level, as well as the national network of farmers with special needs supported by SAFE. The Sasakawa Fund for Extension Education has provided us with a rice and multicrop decorticator, and we hope one day to be able to acquire a storage warehouse. The Loudjouraton group of Molodo is grateful to SAFE ; we are productive!”

Voices from the Field: Nigeria



CROP FAILURE IS FARMERS' FAILURE

This is the Maize Multi Actor Value-chain Platform and Disability Intervention in Tudun Wada, Kano state, Nigeria. The project is supported by SAA Nigeria's Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) program. Muhammad Yaro is a maize Commodity Association Trainer (C.A.T.). He explained: "We have been organized in this maize commodity value-chain organization since January 27, 2014. I am training farmer groups specializing in the maize value chain, which is functioning well. Last year's harvest produced a yield of over 80 bags of maize from the platform group, and this year we are planning to plant more than five hectares of maize, plus a hectare of the improved (TGx1.448) Soy Bean variety. We hold group meetings fortnightly, with members contributing 200 Naira a month. We operate two bank accounts with the Micro Finance Bank and the Bank of Agriculture."

Hajiya Dije Ibrahim is a community organizer & chair of the female group of the Maize Value-chain Actors Association of Tudun-wada,

who said: "My role in this Association is helping women to organize into agricultural enterprise groups. In fact, we have many groups within this association involved in different activities along the value chain, including maize producers, processors, marketers, agro-dealers and transporters. We reap the benefits of being in the platform. For instance, when a woman member gives birth, we contribute money for her and her child's well being. Another example is when a rainy season comes. If a woman member does not have the means to start farming, we give money from our association account as a loan to help her, with little or no interest. She pays back after the harvest in cash or in kind. We support women members with family health issues through advice and medicine provision. There are many benefits associated with membership of the Association, and we are looking to scale up in the future, supported by the involvement of SAA Nigeria."

Ibrahim Umar Dalawa is chairman of the male group of the organi-

zation. He said that the 25-member value chain actors comprise of the farmers, the marketers, the agro-chemical dealers, the extension workers, and representatives of the local government overseeing what they are doing. "We have acquired a subsidized multi-purpose crop thresher from SAA's Theme 2 activities in the state, which provide services to members during harvest seasons at a 50% discount for platform members, and full payment to non-members. We take part in seminars, interactive sessions between farmers and agro-chemical dealers, and companies that provide seeds for the farmers to make sure that the seeds we use are authentic and from a genuine company. We were linked to seed companies and extension agents in Kano and Zaria who give us advice on the type of seeds we are going to plant, the type of chemicals we are going to use, and the type of fertilizer we are going to apply, including the duration. Crop failure is farmers' failure so these guides are useful to us."



Maize Multi Actor Value-chain Platform and Disability Intervention in Tudun Wada, Kano state, Nigeria. The project is supported by SAA Nigeria's Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) program.

LET YOUR MOTTO 'TAKE IT TO THE FARMER' REACH ALL TUDUN WADA



Abdullahi Kau is a farmer and maize grower living in Kano State, Nigeria. Abdullahi owns a one hectare farm. He farms both for demonstration and commercial purposes.

Abdullahi Kau is a farmer and maize grower living in the Tudun Wada Local Government Area of Kano State, Nigeria. He is very happy with how SG-2000 Nigeria trained him, which has resulted in him being happy to conduct agriculture as a business. Abdullahi owns a one hectare farm. He farms both for

demonstration in his Model Adoption Plot (MAP), and commercial purposes. "Sasakawa first trained me on how to plant, and how to apply fertilizer. Next, they taught me how to tell when my produce is ripe, how I should harvest it, and how best to access the market. The Sasakawa Africa Association

has taught me the importance of looking for good variety in the seeds I plant. My farming and planting methods have also improved. Before, I used to put four or five seeds in a hole, but now I've learnt to put one or two seeds in a hole, which is more efficient. I have also reduced the distance between planting to 10cm, from 25cm or 30cm before. Because I've seen so many advantages in these methods I am going to continue practicing what I've learned, even when Sasakawa has left." Abdullahi also spoke about the processes and technology he has been using to reduce post-harvest losses, which in the past had been extensive. "I now make sure I allow sufficient time for drying my harvest before I go through the process of threshing. Perhaps most importantly, thanks to Sasakawa's intervention I now make regular use of PICS (Purdue Improved Crop Storage) bags, which have completely eradicated grain loss during storage." In terms of market access, Abdullahi said he harvested 20 bags in the last harvesting season, and now expects this to increase to 40 to 50 bags which he is going to use for commercial purposes. "Overall I apply the whole value chain concept that SG-2000 Nigeria has imparted in my farming practice. I am now helping my family and relatives from the gains. I have seven kids, five of them going to school and two babies. Sasakawa has helped me and as a result my farming business has improved significantly. 'Take it to the Farmer' is Sasakawa's motto, and I hope they continue so all farmers in Tudun Wada can benefit from it."

Saskawa Africa Fund for Education (SAFE) has five programs in the Nigeria. Bayero University Kano is among the implimenting Universities of the program. Mid-career students of the university posed for a group photo infront of the the department of Agronomy.



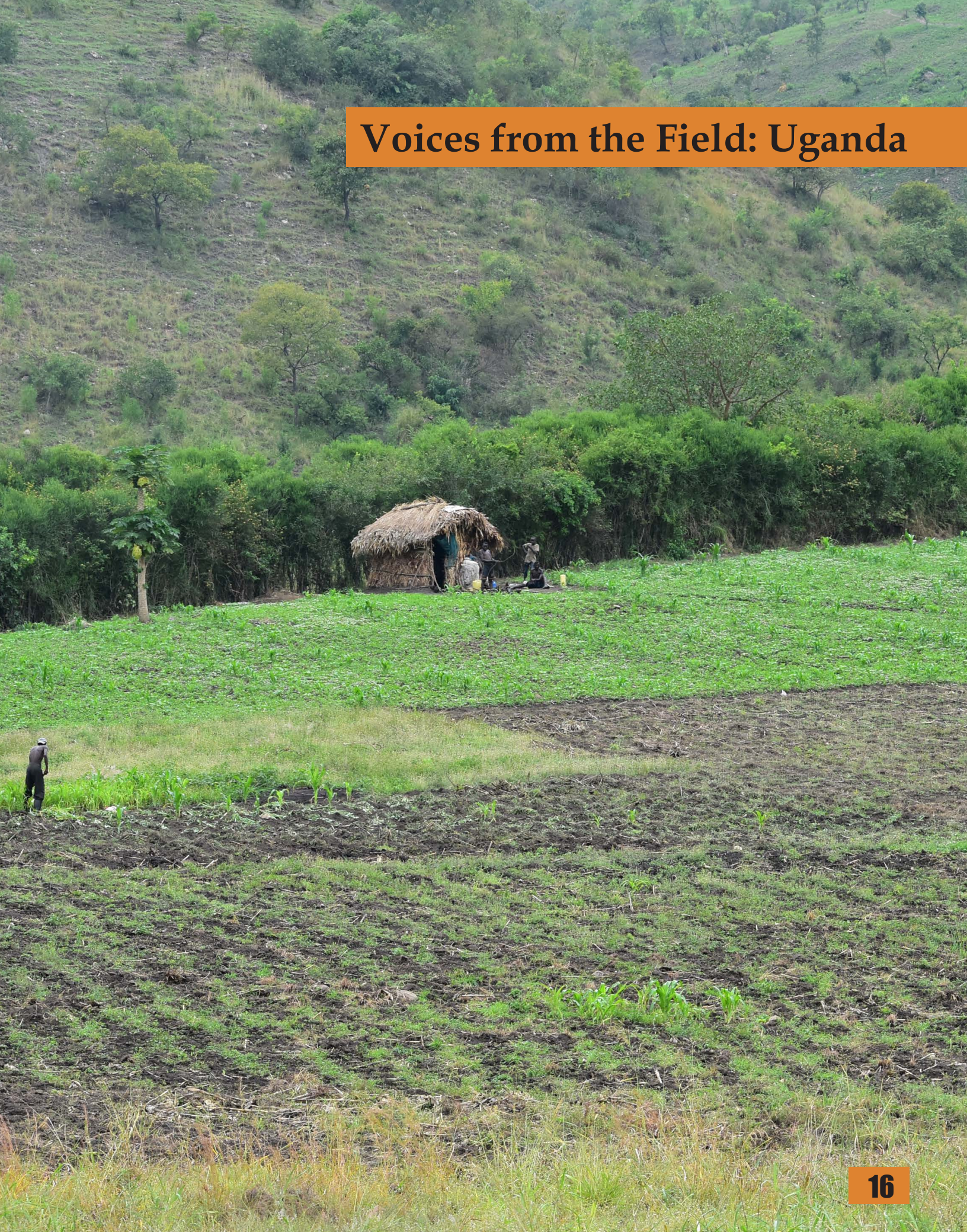
“WHEN KNOWLEDGE EMPOWERS YOU, CHALLENGES ARE NOT PROBLEMS”

The Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) is a sister organisation of SAA, with a focus on providing academic qualifications to mid-career extension agents. So far, SAFE has graduated nearly 6,000 students across a network of 24 universities and colleges in nine African countries. The first SAFE program in Nigeria was launched in 2002 at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in Zaria. The purpose of the SAFE program in Nigeria is to contribute towards the agricultural development efforts of the country through the production of qualified human resources in the field of agricultural extension advisory services – to the benefit of smallholder farm families. Currently, SAFE has five programs in the following universities: ABU in Zaria, Bayero University Kano (BUK) in Kano, Adamawa State University (Adamawa), University of Ilorin (Ilorin) and Usmanu Danfodiyo University (in Sokoto). SAFE started Bayero University's program in 2007. Students come from Kano state and others, including: Adamawa, Tarawa, Borno, Gombe, and Ilorin. Garba Abdullahi is a third year

mid-career student at BUK, currently implementing his Supervised Enterprise Projects (SEPs). Prior to his enrollment at BUK, Garba obtained a Higher National Diploma (HND) and worked as an agricultural extension agent with the Agricultural Development Project (ADP). He explained: “SAFE's intervention here means indirectly helping millions of Nigerians towards food security, because nowadays at least 80% of my colleagues have a HND. They need the opportunity to come where I am because with just that HND they cannot bridge the gap. That's why we are appealing to continue funding SAFE's programs; so that many more people can join. I have a lot of confidence that when I go back to my community I will implement better practices than in the past. I am learning here that, yes, the challenges are bigger and the answers are different. But when knowledge empowers you, challenges are not problems and we can solve them and empower our community in return. With this experience now when I go back to my SEPs in the community, we will change the format and improve the system.”

Patience Kantomah is a first-year student pursuing her BSc in Agricultural Extension. She graduated in 2012 from Kaduna Polytechnic, department of Agricultural Engineering. She went on to work for a private school in Kaduna state. She said: “I had initially planned to apply for a post-graduate course in education, until somebody suggested that I register for the SAFE program instead. When I was admitted, I realized how beneficial the program would be to my field, developing my experience as an agricultural engineer in soil and water with additional knowledge of agricultural extension. Through SAFE's program, and with detailed knowledge of agricultural extension, I will be able to deliver more for the people in my community; particularly those who are struggling in agriculture, by sharing best practices. A major challenge is that I am one of only three females in the class, but I believe that with subsequent admissions in the coming years, increasing numbers of women will enroll in the program so that more hands will come together in making the extension program a success.”

Voices from the Field: Uganda



FROM 'HOPELESS WIDOW' TO A HOUSEHOLD FULL OF JOY, THE STORY OF HELLEN EPURUGE

Nyarakoti Farmer Field School 1 is situated in Asinge C, Nyarakoti parish, in the Usukuru sub county of Tororo District. It consists of 30 members, 18 of whom are women. Its enterprises include 6 acres of rice production, 4 acres of groundnuts and 8 acres of maize. Formed in 2012 and fully registered, it initially received Ugandan Shilling (USh.) 10,000,000 from SAA in Uganda under the Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) project, which was invested in 'farming as a business' and paid back in one year. Profits have been reinvested in the school's ongoing enterprises. The group members received training in production, postharvest handling and marketing, and were educated on the benefits of farming as a business.

Hellen Epurege is the group secretary. She is a widow who said she had lost hope after the death of her husband, leaving her as the sole provider for six children. After attending Bugiri Agri-business and Institutional Development Association (BAIDA) and becoming involved with the Nyarakoti group, her life changed. Telling her story, Hellen said: "When my husband died, he was the one providing for the family. I lost hope; I was miserable. Many people didn't think I would last a month as a housewife with 6 children. In 2014, our group was invited for training in BAIDA,

Bugiri, which was provided by SAA Uganda's Mr. James Murangira.

Acting on his advice and guidance, my fellow group members and I began practicing what we had learned. These new techniques, including postharvest handling and the concept of farming as a business have completely changed my life. When my husband died, two of my children had just joined S1 (secondary school) in Iganga town. This could have been the end of their education, but instead they have just started their final O level (post-secondary school) year and plan on training as teachers. My last born, who was in P1 when her father died, is now in P5; and my second last is in Manjasi high school, a very good school in Tororo." She continued: "Since my training from SAA, food security is not a problem and my family are eating well. Now I am invited to attend seminars, and I have even traveled to do exchange visits in Nairobi. My children always report to school, and people in the community ask me to share my knowledge with them so they can improve their lives as well. My family and I are a testament to SAA and what can be achieved through hard work and proper training. "Before I felt there was no hope for me. Farming has turned my life around, and it is all because of SAA. I cannot thank them enough!"





Hellen Epurege is secretary in Nyarakoti Farmer Field School located in Tororo District, Uganda. The groups runs 6 acres of rice production, 4 acres of groundnuts and 8 acres of maize.

A STORY OF SUCCESS WITH THE SASAKAWA AFRICA ASSOCIATION

Tonny Oyer is a 39 year old resident of Awila Parish, Akokoro Sub County in Apac district, Uganda. He is married and has four children. His father passed away early in his life, and his mother some years later, leaving him with the responsibility to take care of his six siblings.

In 2005, he dropped out of secondary school to obtain a certificate in woodwork and carpentry. After completing the course he opened a workshop, but was unable to make enough money to support his family. He decided to turn to farming, as he owned a large area of land that was left to him by his father. Such was his success, Tonny is today a household name in his village. However this success did not happen overnight. It took hard work, putting his knowledge and skills into practice.

In 2013, the Sasakawa Africa Association started implementing the Growth for Uganda Project in Apac and Dokolo districts. The goal of the project is to increase farm productivity and the household incomes of smallholder farmers. Farmers organized in groups would host demonstrations and receive practical training on good agriculture prac-

tices across the value chain. The Awila Integrated Farmers' Association is one of the groups that benefited from the project. Unsatisfied with the output from his own farm, Tonny asked to join the group, and was accepted. His expectation was to get help on how to improve his production.

One of the group members was selected to host a demonstration that season, and was provided with the following inputs from SAA: maize seed (Longe 5); fertilizer (DAP and Urea); and a pesticide. With the help of the Community Based Facilitator (CBF), a Women Assisted Demonstration plot (WAD) was established. The demonstration was well managed and the crop performed well. Tonny also observed a Community Variety Plot (CVP) that was established by SAA in another village in his parish. Again, the crops on the demonstration looked healthy and produced high yields for the plot size. Taking what he'd learned, Tonny received 10kg of maize- Longe 5, an improved seed variety, on credit from the Commodity Association Trader (CAT). The CAT agreed that he would pay after the maize was sold. Before planting, he made

sure to use the correct spacing of 75cmX60cm, which he had learnt from the demonstration plots. He also employed other practices he had observed, including keeping his field free of weeds.

Tonny has experienced excellent results, with significantly improved yields from his farm. He has since been able to finish building his house, and recently completed the roof. Thanks to the Awila Integrated Farmers' Association, he has been able to find a market for his produce through their collective marketing efforts. He also benefits from easy access to credit when the need arises. The group members have healthy competition amongst themselves, which has furthered their progress. Members have acquired assets such as livestock and motorcycles, and many of are building permanent houses for the first time. Tonny said he is grateful to the Sasakawa Africa Association for providing him with opportunities to learn. Without the knowledge and skills he acquired from the demonstrations, he would not be where he is today.



Tonny Oyer has benefited from Sasakawa Africa Association's (SAA) Growth for Uganda Project implemented in Apac and Dokolo districts. The project improved his productivity and enabled him to earn a better income enough to build him a good home.

Maico Kaiondo is chairperson of Chivuvu Savings and Credit Group. He believes that Sasakawa Africa Association's (SAA) technology will improve their productivity.



DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY

Chivuvu Savings And Credit Group is a social fund group located in the Mityana District of the Central Region of Uganda. Maico Kaiondo, who is blind, is the chairperson of the group. He is a respected member of the community, model farmer, and trader in Chivuvu village. He has his farm, goat yard, piggery, chicken and other poultry, and a small eucalyptus forest.

"The social fund group has 20 members. We have the committee that leads the group and I am the chairperson. All these people have abilities and this year they put their trust in me to be the chairperson. The rule stipulates that you must become

the chair for a one year term. We have a written constitution which we follow as a group. We encourage our members to continue training. I personally have obtained two certificates. We are farmers, we are traders and we want to continue progressing." He added: "We visit other farmers who have benefited from SAA, and we adopt the technologies that we see SAA promoting among our farmers. On 4 July last year, we went to Bulera county, a visit organized by SAA, to learn and share with other farmers. We were excited by this. The members benefited a lot from the visit. Now we are preparing all our land

in the SAA way. We are going to farm two acres of maize. We will benefit from the training provided by SAA through the adoption of new technologies including line/row planting and deep placement of fertilizers. We shall grow maize using improved seed varieties so we can harvest large quantities and be able to prosper. What we have also agreed to do is to buy a maize sheller through our savings which we shall also use for business. We will therefore provide services within the sub-county and other counties."

Voices from the Field: Ghana

MID-CAREER STUDENTS OF SAFE PROGRAMME HELP COMMUNITIES FOCUS ON VALUE-CHAIN ORIENTED AGRICULTURE

Robert Koomson is a farmer from the Krofu Agro Processors Association, located in Krofu, Mfantseman Municipal District, Central Region of Ghana. Elisabeth Utuka is also from the central region and from the Theomark Enterprise, situated in Assin Edubiase. The two farmers were in attendance at the West Africa Regional Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) Stakeholder Workshop, held in Accra, Ghana. Prof. Festus Annor-Frempong, Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, explains the value of the programme.

"Robert and Elisabeth were invited to the workshop because they are key stakeholders. Our Supervised Enterprise Projects (SEPs) students work with them and focus on putting their experiences into a wider perspective to demonstrate that farmers are not working in isolation. SEPs are projects that place SAFE students in rural areas to work with smallholder farmers and improve agricultural practices.

"All the work we do is to assist the farmers, and in turn the farmers are very helpful to us, especially during the SEPs. When they are here they tell their stories as to how the programme has helped them, what they like about our student-led SEPs, what can be done to improve the SAFE programme, and what they can contribute as stakeholders for the sustainability and strategy of the programme. This direct input from farmers is invaluable for us". Through her involvement with SAFE, Elisabeth is now involved in agricultural practices at more points along



Robert Koomson & Elisabeth Utuka work with Supervised Enterprise Projects (SEPs) that place SAFE students in rural areas to work with smallholder farmers and improve agricultural practices.

the value-chain. She explained: "We plant cassava over two acres of land and process it into Garri (a popular West African food made from cassava). We sow maize (two acres), and rice (five acres) too. We also own six acres of palm nuts destined for palm oil production by our cooperative consisting of eight farmers. We now combine the farming and the processing."

Robert Koomson, who is also secretary of the 30 members Krofu Agro Processors Association, said: "I came here to attend the SAFE regional workshop as a stakeholder, and as beneficiary of SAFE funding. SAFE helped us to rebuild our solar

dryers, as well as fix and strengthen our cottage industry. We process our cassava into products like Garri and high-quality cassava flour; and we process our maize into flour for the production of popular Ghanaian staple foods such as Fante Kenkey and Ga Kenkey. The student researchers in the SAFE programme came to our community to help us improve and engage in value-chain oriented agricultural practices, and postharvest processing and packaging our produce for sale. This has been financially beneficial, which we are maximizing by taking another workshop in our district on group saving."



Judith Obonyo, a member of the Ket Can Itic Farmer Group with her daughter in one of the group's maize fields in Inomo, Apach District Uganda. Each group member plants at least 1 acre of maize using credit from the group to purchase inputs for each season







Betty Acan is Chairperson of Oryen Can Widows and Orphans Care Group. The group engages in confectionary, baking cakes and cassava growing as well as cassava multiplication

Voices from the Field
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Sasakawa Africa Association

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