**Voices from the Field**

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) was founded in 1986 by Norman Borlaug, Jimmy Carter, and Ryoichi Sasakawa, to support smallholder farmers in Africa.

**Voices from the Field** offers an insight into the positive impact and benefits of SAA programs and activities, in the words of the smallholder farmers with whom we work. Through their experiences we continue to learn and improve, working together for a better future for Africa’s smallholder farmers.

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**“I’m really grateful”**

The success story of Dorothy Anima Effa, one of SAFE’s first graduates

By: Joseph Kwesi Sarpong, a Ghanaian national who was among the first intake of SAFE students when the program launched in 1993 in Ghana.

An appraisal carried out by the Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) in 1992 found that 83% of Extension Officers in Ghana were chiefly certificate holders from agricultural colleges. The Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension (SAFE) program was launched in 1993 to support the development of Extension Officers beyond the academic qualifications they had acquired from agricultural colleges. Since its inception, the SAFE program has graduated over 7,000 students across a whole range of disciplines. By developing the confidence of Extension Officers in transferring technologies from research to smallholder farmers on the field, enhancing communication skills and critical thinking abilities, the program has increased the opportunities available to farmers for both their professional and academic progression.

Dr Dorothy Anima Effa, an Extension Officer from Ghana, is also a SAFE graduate who now supervises the doctorate program. Dorothy was among the first intake of SAFE students admitted to the University of Cape Coast, after the program launched in Ghana. Prior to joining, she was an Extension Officer at the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA). After graduating with a first class degree, Dorothy went back to work and later applied for further studies, obtaining her doctorate degree. Whilst at MOFA, she served as the policy and planning directorate, working closely with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Alongside her work, Dorothy lectures at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, where she also supervises two doctoral studies.

“I did not envision achieving so much, academically, even now as a PhD holder” Dorothy reflects, “this wouldn't have been possible without the initial catalyst – the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Extension from the SAFE program. I’m really grateful.”

Today, almost all of the District Directors of Agriculture in Ghana are products of the SAFE programme. Several hold key posts in the Cocoa Services, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as well as other agricultural organizations. The SAFE program has developed qualified professionals in the public and private sectors, helping them achieve the agricultural growth and development needed to achieve food security in Ghana.

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