



COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF PROMOTING ORGANIC FARMING IN NORTHERN GHANA

Bachelor's Degree Work

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Abstract

This case study uses a participatory approach to evaluate challenges in communication for development in an agricultural market-based project located in Northern Ghana, “Organic Markets for Development.” The project engages rural communities around Ghana's largest National Park Mole. The four research questions were 1) How do the communication methods used in the OM4D project influence the adoption process of organic farming among small-scale farmers? 2) What is the communication structure and flow of information within the OM4D project social network? 3) What are the challenges in communication that are hindering the adoption process? and 4) Which recommendations can be made to tackle the challenges faced, improve communication, and build organizational communication capacity based on the learnings of this research? The findings indicate that such interventions have high levels of conflict that are essential to moderate by using effective communication methods. The formal third-party organic certification system forces the OM4D project to use the top-down approach. Also, attitudes originating from a top-down approach were observed, where low adoption is accounted for on farmer characteristics rather than limiting socio-economic factors. Overall, the project succeeded in disseminating information and awareness-raising, but the communication methods were insufficient to facilitate the adoption process and establish a shared understanding and practical problem-solving. The recommendation is to include participatory methods in the project to promote effective community capacity building and engagement.

Keywords: communication for development; diffusion of innovations; participatory approach; organic agriculture; third-party certification; Northern Ghana.

1. Introduction

This case study is researching how the communicative approach and efforts of development organizations affect the rate of adoption of technological change, in this case, the adoption of organic farming by small-scale farmers in Ghana. This chapter will introduce development communication research and its knowledge gaps. The scope and objectives of this research will be defined, and research questions presented. Lastly, the structure of the research paper is outlined.

1.1 Communication for Development Research and Knowledge Gaps

Current definitions state that the objective of “communication for development” is to improve the livelihoods by increasing income and well-being, eliminating social injustice, enabling land reform and freedom of speech, and establishing community centers for leisure and entertainment (Melkote 1991, 229 as cited in Waisbord, 2020). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2020), agricultural development services have significantly changed over the last 30 years. More and more attention is given

to decision-making at a local level. However, systematic literature reviews show that the top-down linear communication approach is primarily used (Schut *et al.*, 2016, cited in Cook, Satizábal, and Curnow, 2021) even if farmers prefer participatory methods (Baah-Ofori, and Amoakohene, 2021).

NGOs and advisory services tend to publish “success stories,” but a transparent communication and organizational, communicative capacity analysis is rare. The commonly acknowledged high level of failure, especially in the long-term success of agricultural development projects in Africa, shows a need to understand better how to tackle these issues and how organizations can develop their capacity to facilitate agricultural development.

Communication development lacks a common framework, and the definition of communication varies between different studies. In this research, communication is understood as “communities and individuals engaging in meaning-making” in horizontal and interactive processes, referring to the definition of Servaes (1996a cited in Waisbord, 2020). *Communication* is also defined as how participants create and share information to reach a mutual understanding (Rogers, 1976, as cited in Waisbord, 2020).

1.2 Objectives and Structure of The Research Paper

This research aims to explore communication methods used in the Organic Markets for Development (OM4D) project and how these influence the adoption outcomes, relationships between different actors, and organizational capacity to facilitate the adoption of organic farming. Four research questions were formed:

1. How do the communication methods used in the OM4D project influence the adoption process of organic farming among small-scale farmers?
2. What is the communication structure and flow of information within the OM4D project social network?
3. What are the challenges in the communication that are hindering the adoption process?
4. Which recommendations can be made to tackle the challenges faced, improve communication, and build organizational communication capacity based on the learnings of this research?

The next chapter, Theoretical background, will explore the two major paradigms in communication for development research, the prevailing models and theories in agricultural development, and factors influencing organizational, communicative capacity. The Methods explain the “*participatory framework for development communication*” components and how

these guided the research design and data collection methods used. Also, how the data was analyzed, justification and ethical considerations are examined at the end of the introduction chapter.

The Results and Discussion are divided into four chapters based on the categories used in the analysis and the research questions they aim to answer. The first chapter, Intervention design, and communication approaches concentrate on the first question, “*How do the communication methods used in the OM4D project influence the adoption process of organic farming among small-scale farmers?*”. The second chapter, Social Network, and Communication Structures answers the questions, “*What is the communication structure and flow of information within the OM4D project social network?*” The last two chapters, Transfer of knowledge, communication styles and Decision making, and Organizational network capacity explore the question “*What are the challenges in the communication which are hindering the adoption process?*”. Lastly, the chapter Conclusion and recommendations outlines and reflects the findings concerning the research questions and gives suggestions to the question “*Which recommendations can be made to tackle the challenges faced, improve communication, and build organizational communication capacity based on the learnings of this research?*”

2. Theoretical Background

This chapter introduces the theoretical background used in this study. The focus is on the “*diffusion of innovations*” theory and the “*system-based approach*.” first, the two paradigms, the **top-down** and **participatory** approaches, are presented. After that, the dominant models and theories of agricultural development are described. In the system-based approach, gender barriers are shortly discussed, especially in the northwestern Ghanaian context. Also, the relation of organic farming in these theories is briefly evaluated. The last topic covers the organizational, communicative capacity, and influence of social network trust.

2.1 Models and Theories of Development Communication

“*Communication for development*” refers to research and interventions focused on improving the living conditions of people struggling with economic, social, or political issues. It can be roughly divided into two paradigms based on their basic premises. The earlier developed paradigms based on linear **top-down** communication and ideas based on stimulus-response communication theories have remained dominant and widely accepted (Waisboard, 2020). The **participatory** approach practices horizontal communication but has been criticized for

its high resource demands (Waddington *et al.* 2014; Feder, Murgai, and Quizon 2004 as cited in Bourne, de Bruyn, and Prior, 2021 and Hagman *et al.*, 2003 as cited in Moyo and Salawu, 2018).

2.1.1 The Dominant Paradigm

The dominant paradigm was closely related to the *modernization theory*.¹ The reason for underdevelopment was seen in attitudes. Therefore, the solution was to transfer information to change attitudes. Change in mentality was believed to change behavior. In this so-called “*knowledge-transfer model*”, communication was seen as the transfer of information, an independent variable that explains the outcomes of interventions. This approach focused on media-centered persuasion towards the adoption of innovations from external sources. In this perspective, communication is seen as a linear process where a “sender” transmits information through a channel to the “receivers” (Waisboard, 2020). Defining communication simply as a transfer of information originates from the *Shannon-Weaver model* (Waisboard, 2020).² The earlier communication for development theories adopted this simplified understanding of communication leading to the assumption that provision of information leads to adoption and ignores essential factors such as is a common understanding reached (Waisboard, 2020). Another communication model used by the dominant paradigms originates from *mass-media theories*, which promote persuasion and linear transmission of information. Persuasion can be understood as a communicative activity to change the response of its audience (Miller, 1980/2002 as cited in Shen, 2013).

In the mid-1970s, the dominant theory in development work *diffusion of innovations* research concluded that interpersonal communication plays a vital role in decision-making. This view led to the creation of the *opinion leader theory*.³ The opinion leader theory argues that there are two ways of information flow: first from the media to opinion leaders and then

¹ According to the modernization theory, the issue of underdevelopment in Third World countries is caused by traditional cultures, creating constraints towards adopting modern attitudes and behavior and a lack of knowledge. Critique of this dependency theory evolved. According to this theory, the issue of the Third World Countries is in the dynamics of the Western capitalist development creating an unequal distribution of resources. Modernization theory was also criticized for its association with the Western vision of progress (Waisboard, 2020).

² The Shannon-Weaver model can be used to study how a signal is sent by using a channel to a receiver, despite a possible “noise source” (Baecker, 2017). However, the Shannon-Weaver model is a mathematical model developed to answer engineering question about communication between machines. It purely concentrates on transmitting information without considering the interaction, emotional reaction, meaning-making, or common understanding between the actors. Using this simplified model to explain human communication has caused huge misunderstandings in communication research (Cobley and Schulz 2013).

³ Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) developed the opinion leader theory (Waisboard, 2020).

from the opinion leaders to the public. The opinion leader theory reasons that audiences depend on the members of their social networks in their decision-making. (Waisboard, 2020)

The *diffusion of innovations* was reviewed and changed the understanding of development communication away from persuasion and towards dialogue (Waisboard, 2020).

The dominant paradigm is criticized for its traditional approaches that practice top-down communication, where local elites in the capital cities are in control of interventions with advice from foreign specialists (Cobley and Schulz 2013). Therefore, the participation of stakeholders is constrained by the interest of foreign NGOs, the financing, and local elites. It forces grassroots organizations to accept uncertainties caused by foreign financing, often including short-term contracts and hierarchical structures (Cook, Satizábal and Curnow, 2021).

The traditional approach undermines the participation of the beneficiaries of the intervention and ignores local knowledge and traditions (Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene 2021). This approach indirectly implies that development organizations have the proper knowledge and that the local populations do not have it which may lead to the adoption of inventions that are not optimally addressing the needs of the target groups (Waisboard, 2020).

2.1.2 The Alternative Paradigms

As an alternative paradigm, a participatory model evolved. One of the participatory model founders is Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in the 1960s and 1970s. In his opinion, development communication should prioritize free dialogue, which is sensitive to cultural identity, trust, and commitment, and produces a sense of ownership as its goal. This approach underlines the importance of interpersonal communication channels and decision-making at the community level, where community members are in charge. The role of development workers is seen as facilitators of dialogue rather than information transmitters. Development communication should promote group interventions that facilitate community-based communication forms that fit the cultural context. The emphasis is on the development process rather than the goals set by outsiders (Waisboard, 2020).

The preference is to carry out interventions by organizations that are familiar with the communities. Learning about the characteristics and problems of the target community is essential for a successful program. Also, pre-links to the communities' help mobilize networks to facilitate community participation (Waisboard, 2020).

Social mobilization refers to bringing together “*social allies*” to identify and raise awareness of needs for development programs, facilitate mobilization of resources and

services, and promote community participation. As a foundation, social mobilization should be based on mutual benefits of the partners and decentralized structures. Also, the social mobilization process interacts closely with participatory models. Social mobilization processes include ideas such as:

- a) the consecration should be built on trust and respect with the local communities,
 - b) existing communication networks should be utilized,
 - c) opinion leaders and active social network actors should be identified,
 - d) field workers should receive training,
 - e) peer group discussions should be established, and
 - f) provision of information and supplies should be organized at meetings
- (Waisboard, 2020).

Some aspects where the participatory models have received critique include:

- there is only a little evidence available about the efficiency of participatory methods (Kolawole, 2013, as cited in Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene, 2021)
 - the level of participation, or who should participate, is not very clear,
 - the participatory approach tends to be slower and may not address issues that need a quick response,
 - the participatory models tend to overlook the effects of mass media,⁴
 - Participation is still based on the Western ideas of democracy and therefore can also be seen as a foreign idea.
 - Not all people may want to participate, or people may be manipulated into participation.
 - The participatory approach can be idealistic and not fit the current funding style.⁵
- (Waisboard, 2020)

2.2 Models and Theories of Agricultural Development

2.2.1 Diffusion of Innovations

The most used theory in agricultural development work is the *diffusion of innovations* by Rogers (Waisboard, 2020). Diffusion refers to the process in which an innovation spreads

⁴ Overlooking the effects of mass media may lead to ignoring the effects of mass media promoting goals opposite to the intervention goals.

⁵ Most funding agencies expect fast and cost-effective results, whereas participation models have a more long-term approach. Expectations of quick results make it difficult to promote participation and evaluate the long-term results of interventions (Waisboard, 2020).

over time within a social system (Anibaldi *et al.*, 2021). It is widely used in social sciences as a process model in decision making, explaining an individual's rate of adoption to innovation.⁶ The diffusion of innovation theory was criticized for its individualistic and psychological biases related to the Western point of view. It was closely related to the outdated ideas of modernization theory but was reviewed in the mid-1970s. During the review, the dominant top-down perspective was modified, and the influence of the sociocultural environment was included in the theory (Waisboard, 2020).

Rogers (2010) divides the process where a non-adopter becomes an adopter into five steps I) awareness, II) persuasion, III) decision, VI) implementation, and V) confirmation. According to Rogers (2010), five perceived attributes explain the rate of adoption: 1) relative advantage; 2) compatibility; 3) complexity; 4) trialability; and 5) observability. It is essential to notice that adoption is a process, not a yes or no question (Rogers, 2010). Moyo and Salawu (2018) introduce different communication methods commonly used at the different stages of decision-making (appendix table 2). Their observation was that the methods used are derived from participatory and top-down approaches.

2.2.2 System-based Approach

In the “*Innovation system*” framework from Amare and Darr (2020), factors influencing the diffusion of innovation are divided into three categories. The first one, “*innovation*,” is concentrated on individuals' behavior mainly determined by the characteristics of the innovation. The second one, “*household context*,” is concentrated on the individuals' characteristics like demography and behavior-related decision making, as well as the individuals' physical environment like livelihood and resources, social capital, and biophysical environment. The third category considers “*system-level*” features like communication, markets, policy, regulations, and stakeholders.⁷

The unbalanced focus of research on farmers and farm-level characteristics compared to political, economic, social, and cultural factors is still criticized. From a *system-based* viewpoint, adopting sustainable farming practices is a process of systematic change. It is not only influenced by farmer's characteristics or farm level characteristics (Anibaldi *et al.*, 2021)

Simplified agricultural development theories do not consider the complexity of organic production systems. The adoption of organic practices can be partly explained by the *diffusion of innovations* theory. However, it is crucial to notice that organic farming is a set of

⁶ Innovation is a practice or technology which is perceived as new (as cited in Anibaldi *et al.*, 2021).

⁷ Further details can be found in appendix table 2.

technological changes rather than one idea or innovation (Simin and Jankovic 2014). An interactional perspective driven from social-psychological models could be an approach to understand the complexity of organic agriculture adoption adequately. The *interactional perspective* views adoption as a collective process where vertical⁸, horizontal⁹, intra-individual¹⁰ and time-related interdependencies¹¹ between practices are considered in the research (Leeuwis and Aarts 2020). Organic farming is a complex bundle of practices that multiple people must adopt simultaneously.¹² An adoption of it can be seen as an interactional process where an individual highly depends on the performance of several people.

Women's position and cultural barriers created by patriarchal social norms are often ignored in research and agricultural development projects (e.g., Anibaldi *et al.* 2021). These barriers include gender norms, patriarchal values, time poverty, a low level of education, and illiteracy (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2019). Development approaches generally reach mainly wealthier and better-educated male farmers (Cook, Satizábal, and Curnow, 2021). In Ghana, only 2% of the women farmers were found to have contact with development agents. For male farmers, this number was 12% (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2019). The gap between genders is significant in Muslim-dominated cultures and polygamous households (Yokying and Lambrecht, 2020). Cultural and religious norms were found to limit women's contact with male development agents and women's bargaining power was especially weak in Northwestern Ghana. In this area, women are typically responsible for planting, cultivation, and weeding, whereas men do physically intensive jobs such as land clearing (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2019).

2.2.3 Organizational Communicative Capacity for Agricultural Development

When identifying the communicative efforts of development organizations, it is also essential to define which capacities an organization needs to function efficiently. Lamm *et al.* (2021) identified such capacities with experts of rural advisory service networks. Two top answers were the importance of communicating a clear vision and mission for the network and transparent fund use. Also, coordinating efforts, managing the social network and dynamic leadership, sharing the strategic plan, human resource development strategies, policies,

⁸ dependence between the behavior of dissimilar others, e.g., another member of a value-chain

⁹ adaptation is dependent on the behavior of other farmers

¹⁰ adaptation of behavior demands complementary adaptation of other behavior at the same time

¹¹ dependence on adaptation decisions done in the past or anticipated in the future

¹² e.g., organic group certification

regulations, methods, and speaking in the local language was mentioned. Timely communication and knowledge about contacting other network members were mentioned as well.

Different relevant results were, for example, the importance of trust between network members. In general, organizational capacity was defined as having enough human and physical resources and funding (Lamm *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, Kabir *et al.* (2021) found that organizational capacity and management influence the performance of field-level advisors. Their findings implicate that providing an "*enabling environment*" and trust between advisors influences job performance. Bourne, de Bruyn, and Prior (2021) argue that advisory agents must have a relationship with the farmers based on trust and capability to resolve conflicts.

3. Methods

A qualitative research method was used to understand communication processes within the OM4D project sufficiently. Descriptive primary data was collected through observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGD). This chapter will first explain the methodological guidelines used in the data collection. Data collection methods, participant observation, FGD, and interviews are described. After the data collection, the methods used to analyze data are explained. In the end, the methodological approach is justified, and ethical considerations are reflected.

3.1 Participatory Framework for Development Communication Research

The methodology was chosen based on the participatory framework from Tacchi and Lennie (2014). Tacchi and Lennie (2014) argued that a participatory approach is essential for development communication because understanding local participants' knowledge and experience is essential. The participatory approach, which this framework is based on, is explained in more detail in the chapter Theoretical background.

The participatory framework is based on seven key components: 1. *Participatory*, 2. *Holistic*, 3. *Complex*, 4. *Emergent*, 5. *Critical*, 6. *Realistic*, and 7. *Learning-based*. Each component acts as a guideline or principle guiding the methodological approach to data collection. The following chapters will explain how these components guided the data collection of this study.

By *holistic*, Tacchi and Lennie (2014) refer to the *system-based approach*, where the communication for development happens within changing social, cultural, and economic systems. Therefore, it is critical to understand how these systems function. The participatory

framework recognizes that these social, cultural, and economic systems are *complex*, have a high level of social conflict, and include participants with different perspectives and agendas. *Emergent* refers to the dynamic and changing nature of the local context. The participatory approach is concentrated on social change and development communication as a process.

The *holistic* view of *complex* social, cultural, and economic systems is recognized by considering the socio-economic and cultural environment where the intervention takes place. Social conflict and different perspectives and agendas of participants are recognized by *critically* cross analyzing the results with different participants. Possible agendas of the participants are recognized in the analysis. Secondary data was also collected to gain a more profound understanding of the intervention.

Research methods need to be flexible, participatory, creative, and well facilitated. The data collection was done during a five-month internship in the OM4D project. The interviews and FGD were kept flexible using a semi- or unstructured format. In addition to the communication processes, intervention description and additional data in the appendix are also included to allow better scientific evaluation and reliability. Secondary data was also collected to gain a more profound understanding of the intervention. The author was facilitating all the FGD.

Tacchi and Lennie (2014) argue that participation is always about power and control and that this is an issue that needs to be *critically* viewed. Therefore, this research aims to consider power structures influenced by gender, wealth, ethnicity, age, and knowledge. It is also essential to recognize that using a participatory approach impacts these power structures. In this study, power structures are recognized in the communication structures. Due to time and resource limitations, the power structures within the communities and between farmers are not included. However, gender-based power structures within the communities are considered due to their importance in a mixed-gender project.

Tacchi and Lennie (2014) criticize unrealistic goals given to the assessment of projects. The participatory approach has a long-term view on development communication based on local realities and methodological pluralism. Furthermore, they see **the participatory approach as a response to the dominant quantitative methods used in the field**. In this research, *realistic* goals include accepting that this study will only be an overview of communication for development in the OM4D project, focusing on top-down and bottom-up communication. Some aspects of the project were not evaluated due to limitations. For more grounded and detailed results, more effort is needed.

The *learning-based* approach actively engages with the participants in the evaluation process to encourage active learning, understanding, empowerment, creativity, and new attitudes and knowledge. Using the *learning-based* approach can lead to organizational development and improve the intervention. In this research *learning-based* approach is practiced through continuous interactions and discussion of results with the participants. The discussion was done through casual interactions and organized FGD for different subgroups in the study.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Participant Observation

The author worked in the organization as an intern and did observations during the research. The internship took place for about five months. She was in Ghana from the 15th of March until the 6th of August 2021. The position was given by the director of Agro Eco – Louis Bolk Institute (AE). The OM4D team and ICS managers introduced her to the communities. She was considered a colleague to the Damongo office team and subordinate to the OM4D team. The OM4D team refers to the AE’s Director, the Value-Chain Coach (VCC), Marketing Coach (MC), and Field Supervisor (FS). A Rocha Ghana (ARG) Damongo project team refers to ARG members in the Northern Sector Damongo office working in the OM4D project, including the Project Manager and two ICS managers. This organizational level of ARG is also often referred to as the grassroots. In distinction, the Administrative/Documentation Officer (A/D Officer) and National Director of ARG located in Accra are referred to as ARG governance.

Observations were done in Damongo, ARG Damongo office, and all six communities participating in the project: Mognori, Murugu, Kpulumbo, Bawena, Wawato, and Gurubagu. Further details about the communities can be found in appendix table 5. The observed people included the OM4D team, the ARG office team, and the farmers, as listed in appendix table 6. These people were observed during their interactions with each other and in their work. Observations were recorded by note keeping.

3.2.2 Interviews

In the interview, two main questions were asked:

- I. Describe one useful/good engagement (*with person A*) in your work that allowed you to be more efficient.

- II. Describe one difficulty/obstacle caused by engagement (*with person A*) or lack of it, which decreased your working efficiency.

These questions were used to determine the type of engagement and relationships the project participants had and perceived usefulness and challenges in communication. The question was asked with different options for “*person A*.” If the interviewed person is, for example, ARG ICS manager, “*person A*” could be an AE team member, the CISs, or the farmers. The participants were asked to give practical examples.

The selection criteria for participants for interviews was based on availability. For example, the ARG governance was not included in this research as there was no opportunity to interview them. Initially, the plan was to interview the ICS Managers, FS, and Project Manager once a week. Because of difficulties in organizing the weekly interviews, only the FS was interviewed more than once. All CISs were interviewed if they were available on the same day as the FGD. The interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder or by note keeping. Five out of seven OM4D and ARG Damongo Office team members were interviewed, excluding the AE’s Director, and assisting ICS Manager. The AE's Director was, however, actively involved via email and casual discussions. Nine of ten CISs from Murugu, Kpulumbo, Bawena, and Gurubagu were interviewed. The list of the interviewed people can be found in the appendix (tables 7 and 8). Due to sensitiveness towards power structures and existing conflicts, some names of people who participated in the research are confidential.

3.2.3 Focus Group Discussions

Like the interviews, the focus group discussions (FGD) had two main questions:

- I. Describe one useful/good engagement (*with person A*) in your work that allowed you to be more efficient.
- II. Describe one difficulty/obstacle caused by engagement (*with person A*) or lack of it, which decreased your working efficiency.

Also, the questions were repeated several times in this case, and “*person A*” represented different project actors. The farmers referred to the ARG team and OM4D team as one. The farmer often had difficulties understanding what was meant by the question. Therefore, additional explanations were needed with easier understandable and translatable terms and concepts (e.g., what has been positive about your interaction with ARG?). The participants were asked to give practical examples.

The FGD was connected to another research data collection about farmers' perception of the relative advantage of organic cassava in the OM4D project done by the same author. The FGD was done in four communities, excluding two which had just joined the project in 2021. The communities where the FGDs were done include Murugu, Kpulumbo, Bawena, and Gurubagu. After the main question was asked, the farmers were free to discuss among themselves, and the author asked more questions to gain a deeper understanding of specific details.

A list of participants was collected. The transcripts of the FGD can be found in the appendix. In total, 92 farmers participated in the FGDs. Participation in the FGD was based on volunteering. However, the CISs might have also influenced which farmers participated. The CIS, collecting the farmers, was asked to prioritize members who have long experience in the project (members since 2019-2020) and include both male and female farmers. The maximum number of farmers participating was 25. In the case of low attendance, farmers who freshly joined the project could participate as well. The participants were compensated for attending.¹³

The interpretation was done by the author but was also influenced by the translator. She does not understand the local languages of the communities. The CISs did the translation in two communities, Murugu and Gurubagu. In Bawena and Kpulumbo, a person outside of the project recommended by the CISs acted as a translator. The level of education is low in the communities, and the English of the translators was only at a basic level. Some of the farmers could also speak and understand English. The discussion was recorded on an audiotape in Gurubagu, Bawena, and Kpulumbo. In Murugu, the researcher made notes of the discussion.

After all the interviews and FGD were done, the results were discussed in three different FGD to avoid wrong interpretations and allow the project team and CISs to participate in the research. For cross-checking the results and observations, one FGD was done with the CISs, one with the ARG Damongo team, and one with AE. The list of FGD can be found in tables 9 and 10, and transcripts can be found in the appendix.

¹³ According to the ICS Manager's recommendation, each farmer was given a soap worth around five GHC for participating. Also, the translator was provided compensation. AE contributed to the research by covering the costs.

3.2.4 Additional secondary data

In addition to the primary data collected, available secondary data were also used. This data may not be published or available outside the OM4D project members. This data includes, for example:

- A report from the Baseline Survey done in 2018 (Van Elzakker, 2018)
- Education materials, such as Mole Organic Landscape Enterprise Internal Standard Rules,
- Activity Plan of the OM4D Project,
- ARG Member farmers records
- The thesis of Jammeh (2021), which he concluded during his internship
- Internship report that was written by the same author (Pöytäniemi, 2021)

This data was used to understand better the intervention and the socio-economic and cultural context and environment where it was taking place.

3.3 Analysis

3.3.1 Household, Innovation, Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics

A Framework from Amare and Darr (2020) was used for categorizing household, innovation, socio-economic and cultural characteristics together with Roger's (2010) perceived attributes. According to Amare and Darr (2020), the categories are divided into (1) *innovation*, (2) *household context*, and (3) *system-level features*. The detailed categories can be found in the appendix, table 3. The characteristics are not analyzed independently, but their influence on the communication processes was considered. Therefore, household, innovation, socio-economic and cultural characteristics are integrated into all the topics. However, some characteristics are listed in the appendix table 17.

3.3.2 Social Network and Communication Structures

This chapter answers the question, "*What is the communication structure and flow of information within the OM4D project social network?*" Social networks and communication structures were considered as a base for understanding communication processes. The OM4D project social network includes actors listed in the internal control system (ICS). The CISs' and farmers' networks are not considered in this research. Top-down and bottom-up communication processes were analyzed. Communication channels between different actors in the network are presented, and the impact of organizational structures on the

communication patterns is interpreted. The analysis was done in excel by creating categories based on the framework introduced in the theoretical background. Detailed categories can be found in appendix table 4.

3.3.3 The Intervention and Communication Approaches

The intervention and communication approaches were analyzed regarding communication for development theory, comparing the top-down and participatory approaches introduced in the theoretical background. Also, typical intervention activities in agricultural development (e.g., see Moyo and Salawu, 2018) were used. This analysis was also done in excel.

3.3.4 Communication for Development

The categorization of communication methods used in the analysis was drawn from the theoretical background introduced earlier in this research. Most used studies include Waisbord's (2020) "*Family tree of theories, methodologies, and strategies in development communication*" and Lammers and Barbour's (2006) "*An institutional theory of organizational communication*."

Communication processes in the context of development communication are organized from simple issues, such as ease of receiving messages, to the more holistic evaluation of the challenges and network capacity of the organizations. Also, the organizational network capacity relating to the OM4D project was evaluated. The analysis was done by organizing topics in excel. These groups were thematically categorized by using different fill colors of the cells. Detailed descriptions of the categories can be found in appendix table 4.

3.4 Justification for methodological approach and ethical considerations

Tacchi and Lennie (2014) argue that traditional research methods are unsuitable for evaluating development communication, as they tend to oversimplify communication processes. This research uses a participatory framework from Tacchi and Lennie (2014) to research and evaluate communication for development. This framework contributes to a whole system approach that prioritizes engagement, relationship, empowerment, and dialogue.

There is an issue with the lack of standardized evaluation of communication for development. Morris (2003) argues that without a vast explanation of the basis of the researcher's interpretations, the validity of research falls low. This research describes the context, methods, and intervention details and reflects on the limitations transparently. To

reflect on the author's interpretations, they were discussed with the OM4D team, ARG Damongo team, and the CISs. Participants with access to email were consulted during the analysis. Active participation of the different actors follows the example of the participatory framework Tacchi and Lennie's (2014) learning-based approach, where the participants are empowered to take a more significant part in the research.

In total, an adequate sample size of 90 farmers was reached. In addition, a sample size of 16 actors working in the OM4D project was included via interviews or FGD. This sample involves all actively involved actors in the OM4D project from AE and ARG apart from the Administration/Documentation (A/D) Officer on maternity leave. It is necessary to recognize that AE's and ARG grassroots level perceptions have more weight than members of ARG governance, who did not have a possibility to explain their perceptions on the issues.

The transcription style was denaturalized, grammar errors were corrected, and the emphasis was on the meaning and perception of the sentences discovered during the FGDs and interviews. English is not the mother tongue for people who participated in the research, and the sentence structure and words used are sometimes culture related. The transcripts were tidied up and additional information is provided in brackets to ensure that the readers can understand the meaning and perceptions of the quotes. The transcripts were sent to the participants who have access to email for evaluation.¹⁴

Ironically, the researcher faced communication problems caused by language and cultural barriers. The research questions were often difficult to interpret for the interviewee or translator, especially when the educational background was significantly different. In future research cultural differences, language barriers, and diversity of perspectives should be given more focus in the data collection. However, the current methodology contributes to high levels of flexibility, allowing the author to concentrate on the issues perceived as important. Due to the high level of interpretation involved, the author's personal biases might have influenced the results of this study. However, bias was minimized through discussions of results and interpretations among the research participants. Nevertheless, in some perceptions, she chose to hold on to her interpretations as the participants also have their own biases.

¹⁴ The CISs and farmers did not have the possibility to evaluate their transcripts as they do not have access to email.

4. Results

The results are divided into subchapters according to the categories used in the analysis. The first chapter introduces the planning and communication approaches of the OM4D project. Social Network and Communication Structures gives fundamental analysis about the OM4D social network and the flow of information. The results presented in Transfer of Knowledge, Communication Styles, and Decision Making are based on categories developed from communication methods of the two dominant paradigms in development communication. The last chapter presents results based on the categories derived from research concerning organizational network capacity.

4.1 The Intervention and Communication Approaches

4.1.1 Planning

OM4D project of IFOAM-organics implemented with Agro Eco – Louis Bolk Institute Ghana (AE)¹⁵ with its national partner, A Rocha Ghana (ARG), was planned to last from November 2017 to October 2021. Further details can be found in the appendix table 20. ARG was chosen as the local partner due to its long experience engaging the communities. The MC mentioned that ARG facilitated entry to the communities helped to build up relationships and gave a perception to the farmers' situation (appendix MC, 24.6.2021). This case study is a part of the OM4D project that aims to **create domestic organic markets through local direct markets linked with high-impact value chains for international markets**.¹⁶

The OM4D project website of IFOAM states as the project's "*Concrete Objectives*" to "*Link producers directly to local customers by setting up and promoting Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), an affordable alternative to third party certification for domestic markets.*" However, a formal third-party certification was established because the idea was to sell the organic cassava to international markets.¹⁷ The Internal Control System (ICS) was

¹⁵ Independent advisory organization based in the Netherlands with an office in Accra, Ghana. Their management-level actors are from the Netherlands, but the rest of the staff are primary Ghanaians (<https://agroeco.net> - "about us").

¹⁶ The OM4D includes other sub-projects in Ghana and other countries and strategies at the national level to promote organic value chains (Van Elzakker, 2018). This case study concentrates only on the sub-project engaging the communities around Mole National Park.

¹⁷ This idea seemed to be based on the observation of the AE's Director that there is an international organic market for organic cassava. However, during participating in the Biofach fair for organic food, the author observed that international customers tend to be skeptical about the quality of sun-dried cassava chips from Third World Countries. The author also observed that the MC had difficulties selling the cassava to international markets due to the quality requirements, and due to that, she was also considering conventional national

established as part of the third-party certification. This type of certification tends to have a top-down approach to communication as the internal standards are pre-defined. AE's Director states that the thought was to keep the message to the farmers simple (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021). Nevertheless, the Project Manager mentions that one of the factors making the project expensive is the organic certification (Project Manager, 18.6.2021)

As a project outcome, the income of smallholder farmers should improve. The OM4D project is a market-demand-based intervention (Van Elzakker, 2018). The project was primarily planned by the first ICS Manager and discussed with the A/D Officer, AE's Director, and the VCC (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).¹⁸ Later on, the project activities and budget was planned by the Project Manager, A/D Officer, and VCC and accepted by the AE's Director (appendix Project Manager, 18.6.2021)¹⁹

Before the project, some communities had cassava rotting in their storages, which led ARG to conclude that they needed help with marketing their cassava (appendix FGD, Murugu, 25.6.2021). AE's Director visited the project area with ARG Northern sector workers to evaluate the situation and discuss the project with the farmers (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021). The choice to concentrate on organic cassava was made in a national workshop in January 2017. The OM4D project addressed some of the farmers' needs indicated by the farmers being pleased about the new opportunity to sell their cassava and get the training (appendix FGDs with farmers).

Based on the Baseline Survey (Van Elzakker 2018), the traditional agricultural practices fit organic farming and should be easily adopted by small-scale farmers. The AE's Director expected that ARG had sufficient knowledge about the communities to address the farmer's needs (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).

The planned actions for the intervention included:

- Training of the farmers
- Establishing internal control system (ICS) and quality management system (QMS)
- Organizing the purchase, logistics, and storage
- Developing the market

markets. However, the NS's Project manager's concern is that the price at national markets is not high enough to cover the project's costs (appendix Project Manager, 29.7.2021).

¹⁸ The previous ICS Manager is not employed in ARG anymore.

¹⁹ However, the Project Manager was not involved in the project in the beginning, according to the AE's Director (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021)

- Capacity building of the Community Resource Management Areas' (CREMAs) Committees

The only training manual available is Mole's Internal Standards. Specific training on the responsibilities of ICS managers and CISs and the internal inspection procedure was taught based on the standard organic requirement. However, there is a lack of training material and shared understanding of the CIS's training. Other shared documents involved, for example, the Activity Plan; done by the VCC together with ARG management²⁰ (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).

AE acts as an advisor for ARG. The AE OM4D team focuses on the capacity building of ARG. ARG is responsible for building the capacity of the CREMAs who train the farmers. The VCC from the OM4D team helped ARG establish the ICS and farm management practices. The Marketing Coach (MC) helped with the QMS and is responsible for market development. The farmers were group certified. The plan was to set up ARG with the CREMA as a commercial company. The project agreement was made after a Baseline Survey was done in 2018. During the Baseline Survey data was collected on the population of the target communities, household composition, social groups, CREMA, education level, living conditions, agricultural practices, markets, finances of the households, and ambitions (Van Elzakker, 2018). It was used as a base for the project design.

4.1.2 Communication Approaches

ARG facilitates resource and landscape management through the CREMAs. The CREMAs committees were involved in the project mainly by choosing the Community Internal Supervisors (CISs). It seems unclear if the CREMAs have been involved in the project in any other way. According to the activity plan (appendix), monthly or quarterly field visits by the VCC from Accra included OM4D visits, ICS managers and CIS training, community training, and farm visit of sampled farmers in each community. Online training was also organized for the ARG team. In addition, the CISs should do an internal inspection of all the farms once a month. The training and capacity-building activities regarding farming activities are listed below in table 1.

²⁰ The author assumes that AGR management refers in this case to the Project Manager and A/D Officer.

Table 1: OM4D Project training and capacity building activities

Activity	Type of training	Timing	Responsibility
Sensitization	Group	March	VCC, ICS managers, CISs
ICS manager Training	Group	March	VCC
CIS Internal Standards and GAP training	Group	March, April, July	ICS Managers
Farmer's training	Group	March, April, July	CISs
ICS training for CISs	Group	May	VCC
Field visits	Individual	Regularly	VCC, ICS managers, CISs

There was one experiment set up for early planting and nutrients from crop rotation during the data collection. However, the setup and management of the experiment failed to give reliable results. The farmers did not understand the instructions correctly, and the CISs and ICS managers did not control the experiment actively (Mensah-Pebi, email, 1.7.2021, 9:44 PM).

4.2 Social Network and Communication Structures

4.2.1 Top-Down Communication

The social network is based on the ICS management structure found in the ICS manual (appendix), with adjustments based on the findings. In AE, the communication typically starts from the AE's Director and is passed on to the VCC and MC. They communicate directly with the ICS managers, who forward the information to the CISs. The CISs typically call a farmers' meeting where the information is provided. In ARG, the information flows from the governing body through the A/D Officer to the Project Manager. Damongo project management briefs the ICS managers, who provide the information to the CISs, and the farmers. The ARG Damongo office staff had some changes recently to the ICS structure.²¹ The roles of different actors in the social network can be found in appendix table 12.

²¹ There was a change in the communication structure during the data collection. AE hired a new FS in Damongo, who also reports directly and actively to AE, without concerns about the type of information. Also, the previous ICS manager left the project quite recently, and a new employee was hired at the ARG Damongo office.

4.2.2 Bottom-Up Communication

Bottom-up communication tends to move the same way as top-down communication. The CISs communicate with the ICS managers, who communicate to AE's VCC or MC concerning non-formal information. Formal information, such as quantitative or monetary data, goes through the Project Manager. He reports to the A/D Officer, who forwards the information to the AE's Director.

Feedback mechanisms are primarily based on data collection by the ARG Damongo team, gathered and forwarded by the A/D Officer to the AE's Director or OM4D team. Such data include, for example, farmers' registration, yield estimations, purchasing data, and expenditure records.

4.2.3 Hierarchical Structure of the Communication

The bottom-up communication between Damongo project management and the AE's Director goes through the A/D Officer. Therefore, the information is supposed to reach the AE's Director through the governing body of ARG. However, the governing body of ARG is not communicating with AE actively. The A/D Officer went on maternity leave during the research. During that time, the AE's Director tried to communicate with the National Director of ARG (AE's Director, AE's FGD 5.8.2021 appendix).

4.2.4 Communication Within and Between the Organizations

The horizontal communication channels utilized to communicate between the organizations include email, phone calls, and occasional face-to-face meetings (Project Manager, 18.6.2021 appendix). The head offices of AE and ARG are in Ghana's capital city Accra where the OM4D team and ARG management are located. The AE's Director lives in the Netherlands but visits Ghana quite regularly.²² ARG has an office in Damongo, near the project area, where the Project Manager, ICS managers, and FS are located. The physical distance limits face-to-face meetings, especially ones where everybody could participate.

4.2.5 Communication Between the Management of the Organizations

ARG follows a hierarchical structure of communication which limits to whom and what kind of information can be communicated. The Project Manager does not see this as an issue but

²² During the research time, the AE's Director visited the project area. Also, the ARG's National Director visited the project area once.

admits it influences his work. Quoting the discussion about delays in the project activities, he states that:

“We need approval for so many things. Manager was calling me just now, and he was asking why you did ABC without approval, I have to defend that.” (Dzekoto, 29.7.2021)

Budget approvals tend to delay the performance of field activities. Even if ARG does not see its hierarchical organizational structures as an issue, members of AE say this is a challenge in communication. It was mentioned by the AE’s Director, VCC, and MC (appendix MC, 24.6.2021 & FGD AE, 5.8.2021). Quoting the VCC:

“What would also help is to reduce the bureaucracy and the protocol of A Rocha. It would help with better communication to get things done in time.” (Mensah-Pebi, 5.8.2021)

Also, the communication between the management of AE and ARG has challenges. Due to the hierarchical structures, the Project Manager does not directly communicate with AE. However, the ARG administration, responsible for reporting to the AE’s Director, is not communicating adequately. The AE’s Director has a perception that the reports sent to him are provided late and are typically overly optimistic. He points out that AE’s OM4D team members generally had a different perception after visiting the field than the A/D Officer providing the reports to AE (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021). The MC perceived that the A/D Officer was acting defensively when she reported the issues she observed in the project (appendix MC 24.6.2021).

4.2.6 Communication between the OM4D and A Rocha Damongo Project Team

The FS started as an intern and was hired by the influence of the AE’s Director. He was assisting ARG on the project in Damongo (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021). However, he did not seem to receive equal treatment from the ARG Damongo team. Quoting the FS about the communication between him and the Damongo project team:

“I think lack of transparency, lack of clarity in their communication towards me is what has been a big challenge for me.” (Jammeh, 1.7.2021)

The FS’s observation is that this might be due to the complex legal position of the FS, caused by the lack of communication about the contract between the top management of ARG and

AE (appendix ARG's FGD 29.7.20219). Nevertheless, the MC felt that the communication delayed by the hierarchical structures was improved after the FS was hired (appendix MC, 24.6.2021).

In general, the OM4D team reported that the activities were occasionally delayed, or information was distorted or misunderstood. The VCC assumes that this might also be due to ARG's project team's limited capacity compared to the number of projects (appendix VCC, 23.6.2021). Also, the ICS manager expresses that they sometimes have too much work (appendix ICS Manager, 14.5.2021). From the Damongo team side, there was a feeling that the OM4D team did not consider the current situation and had unrealistic expectations towards them. Also, the Project Manager and FS agreed that the OM4D team does not always consider the situation on the field. Another aspect pointed out by the FS was involving the grassroots actors more in the planning and giving a more extended notice time for performing activities (appendix FGD ARG 29.7.2021).

4.2.7 Communication between A Rocha/OM4D team and the CISs

Communication with the CISs happens via phone, SMS, and face-to-face. The communities have a weak or no phone network, making it difficult to reach the CISs living in the communities (appendix table 21). Meeting face-to-face can also be challenging because of the distance and occasionally tricky weather conditions (appendix table 24).

The challenges reported by ARG/OM4D team included

- the CISs not forwarding the information or meeting them as promised (appendix FS, 30.6.2021; ICS Manager 18.6.2021),
- lack of following the given instructions, and
- lack of self-initiative (appendix AE's Director, AE's FGD 5.8.2021).

The CISs reported challenges with the communication with ARG/OM4D team, including

- slow reaction times (E.g., appendix FGD CISs, 30.7.2021; Gurubagu, 30.6.2021; also agreed by FS, 29.7.2021),
- short notice for field activities (appendix CIS Bawena, 2.7.2021),
- requests to be at two places at the same time (appendix CIS Kpulumbo, 9.7.2021), and
- lack of transparency (appendix FDG CISs 30.7.2021).

Quoting one of the CIS about the effects of short notice times on his life:

“Sometimes, they will not communicate to us (the CISs) early before they report (visit the community), but maybe I have my travel set. If I plan that tomorrow, I will go to this place, and today a report (message) comes. For that, my plan is destroyed because the information wouldn’t get to me early, and if it did not get to me early, you could not prepare for it (the CIS is not available).” (Bawena, CIS Interview 2.7.2021)

As mentioned earlier, the long reaction time is often affected by ARG’s hierarchical structure and budget constraints. Sometimes the delays in the communication are caused at the ARG Damongo office level, sometimes at the other parts of the chain of communication. In the ARG discussion of results (appendix FGD 29.7.2021), it was generally agreed that there is a lack of consideration of the other actors in the communication chain.

4.2.8 Communication with the Farmers

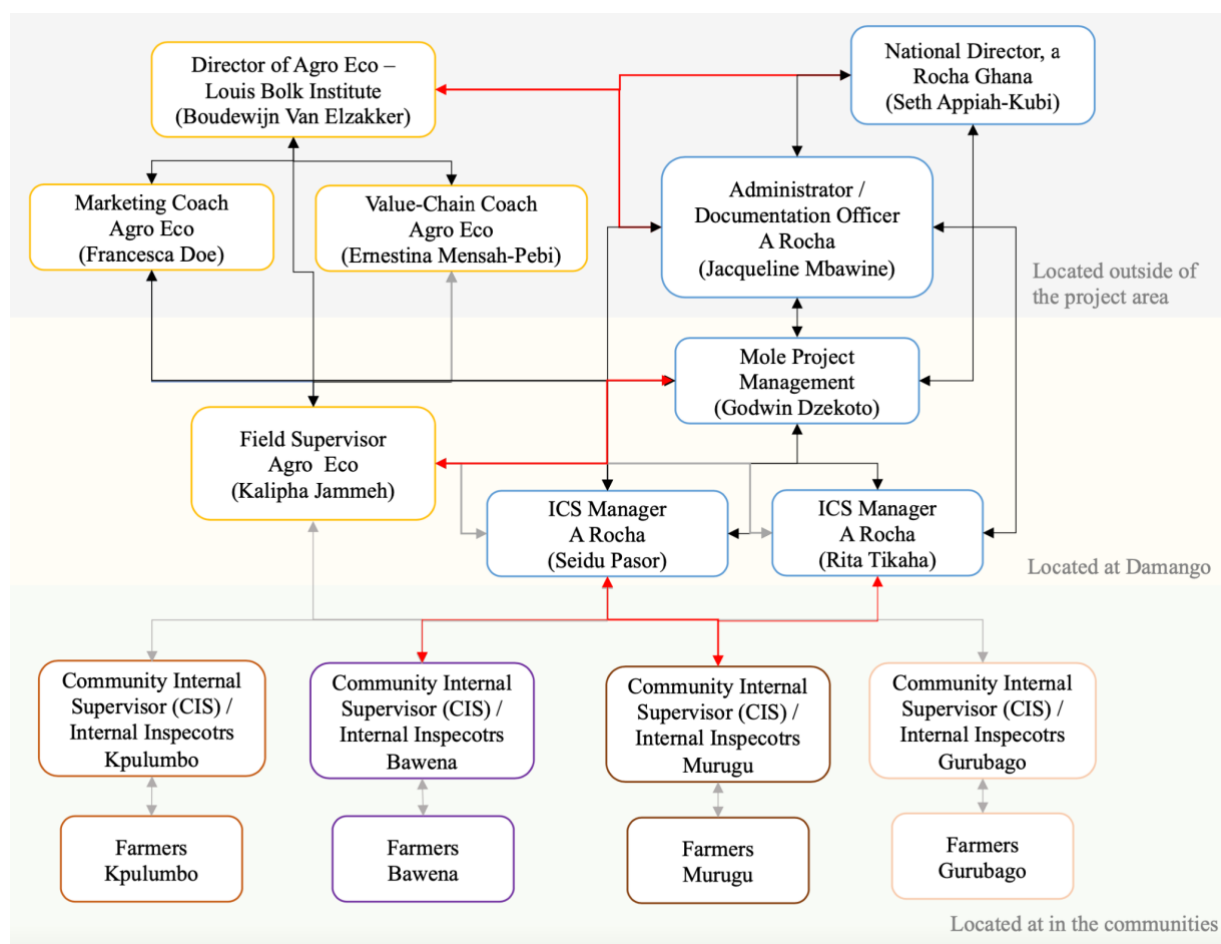
Communication to the farmers happens mainly through the CISs through casual meetings, inspections at the farm, record keeping, and group meetings. The meetings typically involve a quick reminder of the up-to-date activities, checking the current activities, and farm inspections and discussions with the individual farmers. The ARG or OM4D team occasionally visits the communities and farms, organizing group meetings with the farmers. However, the schedule is typically filled with visits to multiple communities and farms, leaving only a short time for discussions.

The challenges with the communication with the farmers reported by ARG/OM4D team involved

- low attendance at the meetings (appendix FS, 30.6.2021; ICS Manager 18.6.2021),
- lack of transparency (appendix ICS Managers, 14.5.2021),
- making up excuses and demanding inputs (appendix AE’s Director, AE’s FGD 5.8.2021).

The CISs had communication challenges with the farmers, such as

- low attendance (appendix FGD CIS, 30.7.2021),
- lack of transparency and
- difficulty with farmers’ record-keeping (appendix Gurubagu, 30.6.2021; FGD CIS 30.7.2021).



Picture 1: Social Network of OM4D Project. Red lines indicate relationships where communication is not properly functioning. Light gray indicates minor communication issues such as network problems. This diagram does not include the two communities that joined in 2021.

4.3 Transfer of Knowledge, Communication Styles, and Decision Making

4.3.1 Transfer of Knowledge

Provision of training and knowledge was perceived as a positive aspect by the farmers in the FGDs (appendix). The CISs and farmers are trained about internal organic standards and Good Agricultural Practises (GAP). The main thing mentioned was that they were glad to learn about the negative health effects of chemical, agricultural input use. Other things mentioned were learning how to farm cassava and practicing crop rotation and intercropping (appendix FGD Bawena 2.7.2021, Gurubagu 30.6.2021, Kpulumbo 9.7.2021).

The training of the CISs included things such as reminding the CISs of their responsibilities like registration of the farmers, record keeping, training of the farmers, and farm inspections (appendix). The CISs would disseminate the training to the farmers. In common, the farmers remember the things they are not supposed to do quite well and some recommended things, but the more profound understanding was relatively low. The harmful

effects of agricultural input usage seemed to concentrate on food consumption (appendix FGD Bawena 2.7.2021, Gurubagu 30.6.2021, Kpulumbo 9.7.2021).²³

Despite knowing what the farmers are supposed not to do or do, they often still practiced their traditional farming methods, such as late planting, field border planting, and killing trees. Sometimes, the farmers used herbicides on the organic field or next to it (appendix VCC, AE's FGD 5.8.2021). The farmers explained that this is due to a lack of workforce or finances to hire labor (appendix table 19). Women are primarily influenced by this issue (appendix table 18). The farmers also grow other crops (Pöytäniemi 2021, Jammeh 2021), and, in the end, they do not have time to weed on the cassava field. Using chemical herbicides was reported to cost less than hiring labor for manual weeding (appendix FGD; Bawena, 2.7.2021).

4.3.2 Persuasion and Valuation of Local Knowledge

One of the things mentioned by the actors working in the OM4D project was the unwillingness of the farmers to change their attitudes and traditional agricultural practices. Quoting the VCC about this:

"They need to change their mind from what they know already and practice what we tell them. They find it very difficult to change, and it is very gradual, making the whole process very slow." (Mensah-Pebi, 5.8.2021)

Two prominent cases will be used as examples for the attitudes of the OM4D actors towards local knowledge and persuasive efforts to change the behavior of the farmers. The first one will be about the annual plan and the second about removing trees from the fields.

As mentioned before, the farmers are expected to practice early planting. Early planting implies that the farmers should plant just before or at the beginning of the rainy season. This way, the cassava gets the best growing period and will give the most yield in the shortest possible time. Also, the storage time of the planting sticks from the last harvest is minimize.²⁴ The negative impacts of planting the cassava late are correspondingly more extended maturation period of the cassava and difficulty to preserve planting sticks until the late planting period (appendix AE's Director, AE's FGD 5.8.2021; Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).

²³ The spread of such inputs was done mainly by young men/boys without proper protection.

²⁴ Cassava is planted by using cuttings from cassava stems referred as planting sticks.

However, farmers traditionally cut the planting sticks from living cassava instead of storing them. The farmers reported that destruction caused by cattle caused a shortage of planting sticks. Most farmers prefer to practice their traditional planting schedule, where cassava is the last crop planted at the end of the rainy season. The CISs explain that **the farmers prioritize planting other crops (such as yam, groundnuts, maize) before cassava because they die if they are planted at the end of the planting season**. In contrast, **cassava is a drought-resistant crop and will survive even if planted late**. Quoting the ICS manager about how the farmers prioritize their early planting of the crops:

“They prioritize this kind of ready-to-eat food, what to cultivate easily for the family and also, to get instant cash.” (Pasor, 18.6.2021)

The farmers wished for financial aid to hire a workforce to plant the cassava.²⁵ **The opportunity cost of the workforce is highest at the beginning of the season, causing scarcity of the workforce and higher prices.**²⁶ The financial problems were mentioned in every community and influenced especially **the women who could not do the land preparation without help** (appendix table 18). Quoting a CIS about this challenge and especially the vulnerability of the female farmers:

“They can’t plant early simply because there is not enough money, especially the lady, the women. They rely on men to weed, to clear their land before they’re able to. So sometimes these people, some of them will even take money, and they are delaying before they go.” (Gurubagu, 30.6.2021)

One CISs also mentions that if you plant your cassava too early when there is not much vegetation growing, it is likely that the cattle of the Fulani herdsman will eat the sprouting cassava (appendix FGD CISs 30.7.2021).

Different fields have different microclimates that strongly influence whether early planting will be successful. Even as early planting as in December during the dry season can be successful in specific areas. However, sometimes planting, even in March, the beginning of the rainy season can fail due to drought (appendix ICS Manager nr. 1, ARG’s FGD

²⁵ Availability of credit is limited for the farmers (appendix table 19).

²⁶ In this context, opportunity cost refers to the value of benefits lost due to not growing other crops because of using the workforce to plant cassava. For example, suppose farmers use the workforce to grow cassava. In that case, the potential loss of quick income and food self-sustainability represents the lost benefits, and the value of the lost benefits is the opportunity cost.

29.7.2021). The farmers and the ICS Manager also express that sometimes they have been asked to plant or harvest at an unrealistic time considering the local conditions (appendix FGD, Murugu, 25.6.2021; ICS Manager 18.6.2021). Quoting the observations of the FS about this:

“Different communities are different in their soil and based on that you have to consider if it can be done at this point of the year. Even in December, you can plant. Yakub Mahama planted, and his cassava is doing well. So compared to Seidu Takora, it is different. I mean, look at Bawena, Mr. Noah he planted in March, and his cassava did not do well.”²⁷
(Jammeh, 29.7.2021)

The annual plan designed for the OM4D project dismisses farmers’ preferences and does not involve them in the decision-making. Particularly for women who have time limitations due to cultural and social norms, need help for land preparation, and rely on self-grown crops to feed their households, early planting might be unrealistic. It might even be that the adoption process and farmers’ involvement in the project are hindered due to a conflict between the adoption of early planting of cassava and the intermediate household needs (see appendix table 17).

It is culturally forbidden to kill trees that the communities value, such as shea (*Vitellaria paradoxa*) and African locust bean (*Parkia biglobosa*), locally known as Dawadawa. However, the farmers typically kill most of the other trees from the farm by burning the tree trunk, as seen in the picture 2 from a maize field.

²⁷ Mr. Noah is one of the farmers who participated in the early planting experiment.



Picture 2: A Picture of a farmer killing a tree on his maize field by burning the tree's trunk. Source: Pöytäniemi, 2021.

Removing the trees is a centuries-old practice, and the farmers believe that the trees are giving too much shade to the crops. During farmers' contract signing in a community that joined the project in 2021, the reaction of the farmers was to laugh when they were told that removing trees from their field is not allowed in organic farming. The farmers said they could not comply with not removing trees (appendix table 15). One CIS also questioned if the farmers in Europe agreed not to remove trees from their fields. However, in one community, the CISs and farmers were claiming that they have understood and accepted not to remove trees from the organic fields (appendix Kpulumbo 9.7.2021)

Deforestation leading to further environmental degradation is observable in the project area (Jammeh, 2021). Typically, organic farming in the tropics aims to develop sustainable agroforestry systems. The typical slash-and-burn agriculture, which involves killing the trees by burning, negatively influences the environment. Therefore, the AE's Director states that removal of trees should not be allowed in organic farming (appendix AE's FGD 5.8.2021). Initially, the farmers were allowed to kill some trees. However, as observed by the team, these instructions were confusing for the farmers and the CISs and were changed. The confusion might be due to how the instructions were translated to the local language (Van

Elzakker, email 11.3.2021). Further details about the tree removal discussion can be found in table 23, appendix.

As there are many things that the farmers would do differently without the influence of the OM4D project, persuasion was commonly observed as a communication method used by the VCC, the ICS managers, and the FS. Also, the CISs mentioned that they must motivate the farmers to join and convince the farmers to join or follow the internal standards (appendix Bawena 2.7.2021, Gurubago 30.6.2021, Kpulumbo 9.7.2021)

4.3.3 Decision making and Sense of Ownership

The decision-making is mainly done in Accra, in the head offices of the organizations, and local knowledge and wishes tend to be ignored. Quoting the FS's observation about the decision making about the Activity Plan:

“They are not considering each other, everybody is doing their own thinking, and there is not much discussion about it, no debating.”
(Jammeh, 29.7.2021)

The author has the same observation as a common lack of discussions between the different stakeholders. The AE's Director's perception is that the same issues have been discussed repeatedly every year. He states that as the changes farmers need to make to start organic cassava farming were evaluated to be minimal such challenges were not expected. He also evaluates that many of these challenges are perceptions made by the project actors and sees the issue rather in the late mobilizing of farmers by ARG and poor management of the CISs' work (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021). He argues that the farmers used to grow cassava before the project, and they started to complain about such problems as cattle grazing, planting sticks, weeding, lack of finances, and the purchasing price after the project was established as they would see an opportunity to receive external inputs (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).

Concerning the Activity Plan, farmers' local knowledge and wishes about the planting time were ignored. The reluctance of the farmers to change their traditional practices has caused some frustration for the OM4D team. This failure is also typically blamed on ARG workers as some members of AE perceive that the ARG Damongo team should be making more efforts (appendix VCC, 23.6.2021) or on the farmers' characteristics, such as their attitudes or educational level (appendix FGD 5.8.2021, Van Elzakker, email 14.3.2021). The ICS Manager states that the farmers need more sensitization, and it should be done earlier by

the VCC (appendix ICS Manager, 18.6.2021). Actors in the different organizations seem to perceive that the other organization should perform better. Challenge could be in the insufficient problem-solving capacity of the OM4D project actors.

The negotiation power of the people working at the Damongo office was limited. The instructions of the AE's Director as perceived in the field were that trees should not be removed from organic fields. In the contract signed by the farmers, the removal of trees is allowed but limited (appendix). Nevertheless, the VCC insisted that the removal of trees should not be allowed. For example, some OM4D member farmers are already planting cashew trees in their organic fields (FGD Bawena 2.7.2021) or planting organic cassava on existing cashew fields. Solution could be found if there would be flexibility for negotiation with the CISs and farmers.

Based on the observations and discussion with the farmers and project actors working at the grassroots level, the perception is that the challenges the farmers face are real, even if the farmers might sometimes use them as an excuse to ask for inputs. The assumption that the changes in the organic cassava farming demands from the farmers would be minimal was incorrect based on the analysis of this research and recognized by the EA's Director (Van Elzakker, email 14.3.2021). Shift to commercial organic cassava farming changed the household's livelihood strategies forcing the farmers to prioritize their use of resources and revise preferred agricultural practices. Therefore, it only seems natural that these issues have arisen during the project. The capacity of the OM4D project to solve these issues has not been sufficient. The issues are not taken seriously because of views of the OM4D team or are not acted on because of the limited capacity of the ARG Damongo team.

4.4 Organizational Network Capacity

4.4.1 Funding & Physical and Human Resources

A lack of revenue from the cassava sales created budget constraints reflected in many project activities. The project funding was budgeted until April 2021, and after this, the cassava sales were supposed to fund the project's activities. However, the amount of purchased cassava was less than expected (appendix MC 24.6.2021) and was still not sold until the end of data collection for this study at the beginning of August.

ARG already had problems with the funding of last year. Two mills were built as a part of the project, and two of the communities were provided motorbikes. However, the initial plan

was to build more mills and provide more motorbikes for the CIsSs. Quoting the Project Manager about this issue:

“We had a budget for motorbikes last year. The budget for the project yearly, as (AE's Director) would tell, is financed through the project. You need money for many things, so you start gradually. The budget we put in the buildings in Bawena and Murugu, we were supposed to have one in Kpulumbo, but the money was not enough. We didn't want to do anything which was below a particular standard.” (Dzekoto, 29.7.2021)

The VCC said that ARG was unwilling to be transparent about their spending in the CIsSs' allowance (appendix AE' FGD, 5.8.2021). The communication about the expenses has not been transparent to the AE's Director either. Quoting the AE's Director:

“A Rocha has not been able to communicate its expenditure on the OM4D project subsidize of the last year. So, we don't know how much is left, and we don't know how much is needed for this year.” (Van Elzakker, 5.8.2021)

Another challenge observed was the limited capacity of the ARG project team. ARG has many other projects where the same people are working. The Project Manager is often not present at the Damango office. The ICS managers have an unbalanced distribution of work.²⁸ The more experienced ICS manager said he is constantly stressed and tired. The staff time is not included in the budget of the OM4D project. Quoting how the Project Manager explained the situation:

“Staff time is supposed to be our, probably A Rocha's side or commitment there. So, it is supposed to come from A Rocha. So, there is no budget like that for staff.” (Dzekoto, 18.6.2021)

The work of the CIsSs is based on volunteering but is quite demanding and time-consuming. They have been paid some allowance but mainly petrol money. There was a problem with misusing the motorcycles and tricycles given to Bawena that led to suspending the all CIsSs' allowances and petrol money from March to June, and due to this, the CIsSs were not doing their work. The delay was due to the top management of ARG delaying reacting to the issue (AE's Director at AE's FGD, 5.8.2021).

²⁸ Due to differences in experience between the ICS managers. The ICS managers express that they have more work than they can, so they cannot perfectly complete some tasks.

Even after ARG started paying the CISs' allowance/petrol money again, there was confusion with how the CISs were supposed to use the money.²⁹ Quoting one of the CIS concerning the allowances:

“Our allowance, we were told that every month we will be given some, but now what they are giving us they say fuel allowance, so we don't understand whether it is the fuel allowance, or it is a monthly payment they are giving us. We were told that every month they will pay us something, but now, whenever they give us money, they say it is for fuel.” (Murugu, 25.6.2021)

Before, the CISs were also given small “soap money” to help them (appendix CIS interview at Kpulumbo, 9.7.2021). The reason why ARG stopped paying the “soap money” to the CISs might also be due to budget constraints. AE's Director comments on this issue:

“You can talk about allowances for the CISs and this and that, but A Rocha basically does not have a budget for it because we are now running in overtime.” (Van Elzakker, 5.8.2021)

4.4.2 Communication Language

There is a language barrier, as most farmers do not speak fluent English (appendix table 22.). The farmers depend on the CISs, and their understanding of the Internal Standards and GAP as documents are only in English, and most of the farmers are illiterate. The use of English, especially the use of complicated terms which are not familiar to the CISs, was observed to cause a lack of understanding about the Internal Standards, GAP, and the content of the farmers' contract (appendix FGD CISs, 30.7.2021). Some details, especially ARG's responsibilities, were not well explained.³⁰

²⁹ Many of the CISs find it illogical that the funds provided to them are called allowance when they are supposed to use it for fuel of the motorbikes. The CISs also generally agree that the money is not enough even for petrol and wonder why the CISs are not consulted about these matters. The CISs also perceive that it is unfair that every community is paid the same amount, no matter how many CISs or farmers are in the community (CISs training, 24.5.2021). Also, the people working at the mill have not been paid and are restless about it (visit to the mill Murugu, 3.7.2021). However, this is acknowledged by the Project Manager, and there is a plan to change the structure of the CISs' allowances (appendix Project Manager at ARG's FGD, 29.7.2021).

³⁰ The author organized the contract signing with her colleague, the ICS manager. She observed the ICS manager explaining the contract in other communities than Kpulumbo. The contract signing dates can be found in appendix table 14.

4.4.3 Coordinated Efforts and Timely Communication

As discussed earlier, such issues as the hierarchical structures of ARG, especially budget constraints and general lack of consideration of other members in the communication chain, cause delays in the communication (appendix FGD, ARG, 29.7.2021; VCC, 23.6.2021; MC, 24.6.2021). This chapter gives an example regarding the cassava planting sticks of the challenges in timely communication and coordinating efforts.

Since March some farmers asked for planting sticks, but nothing was done until June. Most farmers said they did not have extra planting sticks to provide for other farmers. The issue seemed to be an unwillingness to provide the sticks for free. The ICS manager said that most farmers were unwilling to admit that they have cassava sticks until they knew they would be compensated (WhatsApp message Tikaha 10.3.2021 and appendix FGD ARG, 29.7.2021).

Based on the observations and interviews, the farmers, CISs (see appendix Gurubagu 30.6.20021), and CREMAs (appendix CREMAs table 14) have internal issues which restrict them from the mobilization of resources. Also, the FS and Project Manager of ARG (appendix FGD ARG, 29.7.2021) note that the community sense has decreased lately. Even if the old farmers could save cassava sticks from their harvest, the communities need to mobilize planting sticks for the new farmers. Based on the analysis, the farmers and the CISs still need capacity-building and facilitation with coordinating efforts and mobilizing resources. Responding to this challenge late caused further delays in the planting, and the unavailability of planting sticks discouraged farmers from joining the project (appendix Farmers FGD).

Trust Between the Network Members

As mentioned before, a lack of transparency was observed by different actors in the communication network. This chapter will examine trust between the network members. Challenges in transparency issues between the two organizations were already covered regarding funding and general lack of communication. Also, the issues with cooperation within the communities were covered earlier. Some trust issues between the ARG/OM4D team, the CISs, and farmers will be discussed in this chapter.

ARG/OM4D team and the CISs perceive that the farmers are not always transparent. According to the AE's Director and the VCC, excuses for asking inputs is typical for the farmers (appendix FGD AE, 5.8.2021). The belief that the farmers are giving excuses leads sometimes to ignoring the problems the farmers are trying to communicate. For example, the

issue with planting sticks was not resolved for months, and AE dismissed the request for financial aid by the farmers and the gender gap limiting women for participating.³¹

The CISs from Murugu and Bawena had trust issues towards ARG. The trust issues were related to conflicts about the motorbikes/tricycles and CISs' allowances. As mentioned before, the CISs had not been paid their petrol allowance in time, and they did not receive any monetary form of recognition for their contributions. One of the CIS observed a lack of transparency by ARG/OM4D. He mentioned the reluctance of the ARG/OM4D team to discuss some issues in CIS's presence (appendix FGD CISs 30.7.2021). Another CIS reported that sometimes ARG asked the CIS to sign receipts without writing the sum on them. He also mentioned that the CISs are not provided with copies of the receipts. The CISs also do not have an official contract with ARG.³²

In Bawena, the motorcycles and tricycles were misused for other activities (appendix Van Elzakker, 5.8.2021).³³ The Damongo office has trust issues towards the CISs of Bawena, but also some of the CISs in Bawena view ARG negatively in some respects. In Murugu, the issue is related to not receiving motorbikes/tricycles as the other communities did. Quoting the CIS of Murugu about his perspective on the matter when asked if he is satisfied with the communication with ARG:

"Yes, we are, but not all, because of what we were promised. Not all the promises were fulfilled. We were told that we would be given a motorbike and a tricycle for the transportation of the produce. But they have not been provided." (Murugu, 26.6.2021)

The Project Manager denies that such a promise would have been made but says that he is not surprised by the reaction of the CISs in this matter. He notes that the farmers/CISs get quickly excited when they think they are getting something.³⁴ Also, Murugu already has tricycles held by the CREMA, which could also be used for the OM4D project (appendix Proejct Manager, ARG's FGD, 29.7.2021). During the provision of the motorbikes, the ICS Manager noticed that the Murugu CISs felt neglected because they were not receiving

³¹ ARG recognizes this to some degree but cannot act now because of budget constraints (Project Manager, FGD ARG, 29.7.2021).

³² According to the VCC there should be a contract but it was nowhere to be found.

³³ Also, during the time of data collection, one of the CIS had traveled for a week with the CIS's motorbike, making it impossible for the rest of the CISs to complete their work tasks.

³⁴ The Project Manager also pointed out that the farmers and CISs are more likely to talk about their problems with the author as she easily believes them. ARG team would, in this case, for example, know that they have not promised the motorbikes/tricycles for Murugu (appendix FGD ARG 29.7.2021).

motorbikes, even when they had explained what the situation was (appendix ICS Manager nr. 1, ARG'S FGD, 29.7.2021).

Nevertheless, the observation is that the Murugu and Bawena CISs are less motivated to collaborate with ARG workers due to these conflicts. The CISs perceive that ARG does not have time for them (appendix Murugu, 26.6.2021). Quoting one of the CISs of Murugu:

"Even if it comes up that you cannot give it anymore, let the person know that it has happened, and that's why, so we also have more hope for that. If you look at all the communities Kpulumbo and Bawena, they have their motorbikes ready. When you look at Murugu here, we have more farmers than anybody in organic farming. But they don't take care of us." (Murugu, 26.6.2021).

When discussing this, the Project Manager expressed that it is not a matter of caring but a lack of time and resources (appendix Project Manager, ARG's FGD, 29.7.2021). Budget and human resource constraints seem to be why ARG has difficulties upkeeping mutual trust in the relationship with the CISs.³⁵

The CISs report that the farmers occasionally blame them for benefiting from their activities economically.³⁶ In the discussion of results with the CISs (FGD CISs 30.7.2021), the CISs brought up that the farmers blame them for keeping money for themselves, which was supposed to be used in the farmers' meetings (appendix FGD CISs 30.7.2021).³⁷ The ARG Damongo team also mentioned that the farmers are sometimes tricky regarding agreements (appendix FGD 29.7.2021). Last buying season, ARG had trouble with the farmers and did not purchase the expected amount. Quoting ARG ICS manager comments on this:

"A certain kind of challenge which I would also like to mention also comes from the farmers, trust or I say mistrust. When we communicated that all the cassava you grow to us, we are going to buy, if I tell you, please do the harvesting from today until next week, but some still prioritize other

³⁵ However, the Project Manager also noted that Murugu has significant investments in infrastructure and tricycles, looking at all the projects of ARG (Project Manager, ARG's FGD, 29.7.2021).

³⁶ Such cases include the organization of planting sticks where the Gurubagu CISs were blamed for taking the sticks from farmers and selling them for profit (appendix Gurubagu, 30.6.2021). In truth, farmers were asked to pay a small sum for the planting sticks to cover transportation costs (appendix Gurubagu 30.6.2021).

³⁷ This perception is due to other organizations providing "soap money" for the farmers' meetings. However, in the OM4D project, this is not practiced. The CISs report that this is also why the farmers are not motivated to attend the meetings from OM4D.

different jobs. Let's see if I do ABC, then I get back to the cassava. But by that time, the cassava, let's say it has delayed the harvesting, and then the buying (cassava purchase) is also delayed. So, most of them harvested very late; even when we were buying, we did not get the numbers." (Pasor, 18.6.2021)

The analysis indicates that the issues with cassava purchasing caused trust issues on both sides. The ICS Managers feel that the farmers are not committed to the project. However, some farmers feel that ARG did not keep their side of the deal because of the lower pricing than cassava's market price (Pöytäniemi 2021 & appendix farmers FGD).

According to the AE's Director, the price change was not adequately communicated. When the price issue was communicated to the AE's Director, he was skeptical about the received information (meeting with ARG, 15.3.2021 Accra, Van Elzakker, email 14.3.2021). He believes that the farmers estimate the market price based on one buyer and so it does not represent the true market price (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).³⁸ However, the farmers were telling the truth even if a bit overestimated, confirmed by the ICS Manager (appendix, ICS Manager 18.6.2021 & Pöytäniemi 2021). Nevertheless, the AE's Director's perception was that there should have been more discussion about the price issue. Quoting the AE's Director:

"We should have talked with A Rocha in Damongo about whether we will buy it or not. That they did not do, I think." (Van Elzakker, 5.8.2021)

The AE's Director also commented on the price issue that ARG agreed that if the farmers can sell their cassava at a better price somewhere else, they should be allowed. However, this was not communicated to the ARG Damongo office (appendix VCC, AE's FGD 5.8.2021).

However, this would create a problematic position for ARG, as the project's future funding is expected to come from organic cassava sales revenues.

5. Discussion

Development agencies tend to advocate their success stories more than transparent reports about challenges in the intervention. Research of development communication lacks a general framework for analyzing, and therefore comparing results of different studies can be

³⁸ In the email, the AE's Director refers that the farmers "insist on phantasy prices" (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).

challenging. Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene (2021) urge that participatory approaches do not have enough evidence. There is a lack of transparent analysis of the challenges agricultural development projects face as development organizations prefer to advertise themselves with “success stories.” Nevertheless, this chapter aims to connect the different aspects of the findings and earlier research. The results were analyzed regarding communication for development theory considering the top-down and participatory approach to gain a comparative understanding of the possible reasons for the challenges observed in this study.

5.1 Intervention Design and Communication Approaches

The OM4D project follows the traditional approach where local elites in the capital cities (ARG governance in Accra) with foreign specialists (AE based in the Netherlands) have the greatest decision power (Cobley and Schulz 2013).³⁹ Therefore, the participation of stakeholders depends on these NGOs’ interests and their foreign funding (see Waisboard, 2020 or Bottazzi, 2020). Choosing a local partner who has long experience engaging the communities and following a local initiative is according to the recommendations of the participatory approach (see Waisboard, 2020).

IFOAM is involved in the project implementation and funding. They state that “*Organic agriculture can help to strengthen livelihoods by: Providing the most appropriate way to achieve ecological, agronomic, and socio-economic intensification of family farming and smallholder agriculture by emphasizing participation and bottom-up approaches, which strengthen the solidarity of rural communities.*” (ifoam.bio). Nevertheless, the formal third-party certification was chosen for the OM4D project. The quality requirements, skepticism of international buyers, and a small quantity in the 2021 purchase made it difficult to sell the cassava to international markets.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the third-party organic certification is costly to the project, and due to that, the product needs to be sold to buyers who are willing to pay organic premiums. The third-party certification has also forced a top-down approach on the project that forces the project to accept external quality requirements and internal standards and, on the other hand, reduces participation of the farmers and a lack of sense of ownership. IFOAM promoted the PGS to reduce the cost of the certification and increase the participation of the farmers (see Bottazzi, 2020 and ifoam.bio). The PGS might have fit better for the OM4D project due to its lower cost and higher participation of farmers. However,

³⁹ However, the AE's Director pointed out that the ARG grassroots level of the organization was primarily involved in the project's planning (Van Elzakker, email 11.3.2021).

⁴⁰ The MC was considering selling the cassava to conventional national markets during the research time.

AE's Director has doubts that the capacity and education of the project actors would have been enough to implement a participatory system (Van Elzakker, email 14.3.2021).

Nevertheless, when this is the promoted and desired direction of IFOAM, as well as recognized in development research, the recommendation is to invest in training and capacity building of development workers.

Cassava is culturally a male crop (Adjebeng-Danquah, *et al.*, 2020), which is already indicated by the land preparation procedures that female farmers typically need help with. Women typically participate by processing the cassava.⁴¹ However, the female farmers' interest in participation is relatively high in the OM4D project. The primary crop being cassava, the female farmers have limitations regarding the workforce demand.⁴²

Comparing the communication approaches used commonly in agricultural development projects, the methods used in the OM4D project are scarce.⁴³ The primary approach is group training. The group training approach is an effective way to disseminate information for a large audience simultaneously (Kabir *et al.*, 2021). Group training and meetings allow the farmers to discuss their problems and receive technical assistance (IFOAM, 2008). However, the time reserved per community barely allowed time to adequately address the challenges and needs of farmers, as displayed in some of the poor communication outcomes. The communication efforts of the OM4D project seem insufficient to fulfill the project's participation, awareness-raising, training, and capacity-building needs. Usage of a wider variety of interactive approaches could create a shared understanding and greater adoption of organic farming (see Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene, 2021).

5.2 Social Network and Communication Structures

The OM4D tends to use more of a linear top-down approach in communication. Comparable to the results of this study, the linear top-down approach concentrates on the transfer of knowledge and attempts to persuade the farmers into behavioral change (Baah-Ofori, and Amoakohene, 2021). The bottom-up feedback mechanism seems to be poorly functioning. Nevertheless, the OM4D project succeeded in raising awareness and addressing some needs of the farmers (appendix Farmers FGD).

⁴¹ In Mognori the women used to process cassava into gari (ICS Manager, 18.6.2021). Also, in the OM4D, the thought was to involve women in the project, primarily in the processing (Van Elzakker 2021).

⁴² The plan is to involve secondary crops in the rotation and

⁴³ For different communication media commonly used in agricultural development, see Moyo and Salawu (2018).
and Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene, (2021)

Network problems hindering communication were also observed by Moyo and Salawu (2018), who found that limited networks restrict the feedback platforms available and hinder effective communication. However, compared to the variety of feedback methods in Moyo and Salawu's (2018) report, the OM4D project has a handicap. A greater variety of feedback could be included in the OM4D project. The ICS manager recommended the participation of local leaders (appendix Pasor, 18.6.2021). Also, Moyo and Salawu (2018) mentioned this and the facilitation of peer meetings.

The OM4D project communication structures force the actors to use sequential delivery of messages through hierarchical distribution patterns (see Rousydiy and Kom, 2020).⁴⁴ In this study, the long chain of communication was recognized to delay the dissemination of information, and occasional distortion of the information was reported. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Rousydiy and Kom (2020). They point out that this form of organizational communication causes delays in the delivery, and the truth and accuracy of the information are disturbed by the interpretations and reproduction of messages.

According to the IFOAM (2008), the participatory approach hierarchies and administrative levels should be minimized. Such power structures negatively influence employee engagement and create a communication gap between the management and subordinates (Obuobisa-Darko, 2020). The hierarchical communication structures impacted the flow of information in the OM4D project. The Project Manager noted that hierarchical communication patterns are “normal” (appendix Proejct Manager, ARG’s FGD 29.7.2021). Obuobisa-Darko (2020) also reports similar findings regarding the Ghanaian organizational culture.

5.3 Transfer of Knowledge, Communication Styles, and Decision Making

The participatory approach recognizes that local knowledge is insufficient when solving agricultural development issues (Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene, 2021). The findings of this study regarding the degradation of the environment due to harmful traditional farming practices are similar. However, the intervention design should recognize that providing the information is insufficient to enable adoption. Interactive communication methods facilitating common understanding, trust, and dialogue should be prioritized (Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene, 2021).

⁴⁴Sequential delivery of messages leads to situations where every individual receiving the message interprets it and sends the result of their interpretation to the next person in the communication chain, which may result in distortion of the message content (Rousydiy and Kom, 2020)

Organizations should manage information and facilitate interactional meaning-making of different stakeholders to coordinate efforts towards the organizational goals (Rousydiy and Kom, 2020). The IFOAM (2008) participatory approach implies that the farmers must participate in constructing knowledge together with all the stakeholders. In the OM4D project, the necessary local knowledge offered by the farmers and CISs about the weather patterns and the farmers' preferences was overlooked in the activity plan. Osumba, Recha, and Oroma (2021) found in their study that a combination of conventional and ingenious weather forecasting improves the accuracy and farmers' trust in the forecasts, likely because farmers are better at predicting location-specific weather. In contrast, conventional weather forecasts are more general for larger geographical locations (Radeny *et al.*, 2019). Similar results were found in the OM4D project, where farmers occasionally perceived that they were instructed to plant or harvest at unrealistic times considering their location-specific climate.

Concerning recognition of farmers' needs, the issues behind the reluctance to practice early planting were not analyzed adequately. Amare and Darr (2020) noted in their review that competition between the intermediate needs of the household and innovation hampers adoption. In their research, Adolph *et al.* (2021) found that farmers make rational trade-offs and prioritize their livelihood goals. In the case of the OM4D project, many farmers decided to prioritize jobs and planting of crops that secure their immediate needs of food and income. The farmers do not seem to trust the OM4D project to ensure their sustenance solely.

Typically for the participatory approach, IFOAM (2008) encourages horizontal power-sharing. Power-sharing refers to defining the organic certification and production standards with the different stakeholders. Farmers are not just in compliance with the certificate but active developers of it. However, the third-party certification system used in this project is less flexible than the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), which can alternatively be used (Haro-Pérez, Cuéllar-Padilla, and Laytte-García, 2021). In the OM4D project, the organizational grassroots negotiation power is low, and the farmers do not have a say in the production standards. Lack of participation in the decision-making reduces the sense of ownership and commitment in the project (see Pouw *et al.*, 2017) that is observable in the OM4D project (see appendix Mensah-Pebi 23.6., Pasor and Tikaha 14.5.2021).

5.4 Organizational Network Capacity

Obuobisa-Darko (2020) found in his study that lack of received reorganization and necessary resources leads to negative relationships. Moreover, lack of funds was observed to cause communication and trust issues. Similar results were found in this study. The CISs'

dissatisfaction caused by perceived inequality in the distribution of resources led to trust issues towards ARG. Moreover, de Oliveira and Rabechini (2019) found that demonstrating empathy and interest in the needs and expectations throughout the project plays a vital role in trust-building. Some of the CISs did not seem to receive enough recognition to keep them engaged in their work done on a volunteer basis.

Obuobisa-Darko (2020) argues that security is essential in interpersonal relationships, especially in the Ghanaian cultural context. This study demonstrated how distrust between network members could lead to weaker job performance. Distrust was observed to develop primarily due to lagging and missing communication, which led to some of the CISs perceiving that ARG does not care for their wellbeing. Obuobisa-Darko (2020) reported that supervisors who demonstrate genuine concern for the wellbeing of the subordinates' facilitates work engagement. In this study, the failure to demonstrate care towards some of the CISs led to distrust towards ARG that contributed to a lack of motivation to perform the required tasks. This observation aligns with Obuobisa-Darko's (2020) study, which emphasizes the importance of timely information sharing and building trust. Also, Bourne, de Bruyn, and Prior (2021) report that advisory agents must have relationships based on trust with the farmers to succeed in their work. To do this, advisory agents should be well-skilled in conflict resolution (Bourne, de Bruyn, and Prior, 2021).

Trust issues in the communities were observed to lead to problems with coordinating efforts and mobilization of resources fostering the adoption process. Also, Yaméogo, Fonta, and Wünscher (2018) note that high levels of cooperation, trust, and solidarity in rural communities are essential for facilitating the adoption of technological change. Development of mistrust was affected by limited dissemination of information, causing perceived exclusivity, jealousy, and distrust—also non-functionality of input, output markets, and credit mechanism was mentioned. In the OM4D project, constraints for joining were observed due to issues with mobilizing inputs (such as planting sticks or credit) and distrust towards the CISs. Similarly, Cueller *et al.* 2006 (as cited in Bourne, de Bruyn, and Prior, 2021) reported issues in the NALEP program due to allowances paid by NGOs hindering communities' capacity for self-mobilizing resources. As ARG is an entry point to the communities for most organizations, they could coordinate the efforts of different projects.

Kabir *et al.* (2021) suspect difficulties in the coordination efforts of field advisors to be due to various interests among organizations. FS perceived that coordinating efforts between the Damongo office team and him was challenging due to unsatisfactory transparency and communication. Reasons for the lack of transparency and communication are unclear but

likely represent the communication issues at the management level of ARG and AE. Kabir *et al.* (2021) pointed out that limited positive outcomes from coordination efforts might be due to “social distrust.” Kabir *et al.* (2021) refer to Chowdhury *et al.* (2014), who found distrust among field-level forest advisors in Bangladesh. In this study, the author suspects that social distrust might be due to the difficult position of the FS as the FS was pushed on the ARG team by AE’s Director.

This study documented issues with technical terminology in the training and farmers’ contracts, causing trouble for the CISs to understand the meaning. The CISs need to translate the training material and farmer’s contract into the local languages. More attention may be paid to the systematic translation of the training content and contract so that all farmers get equal quality of information. This observation is in line with the recommendations of Baah-Ofori and Amoakohene (2021), who suggested, based on their review, using a simple, non-technical, and local language.

Effective governance is essential for successful development agencies (Kabir *et al.*, 2021). As the perspective of actors in ARG’s management was not included in this research, it is challenging to conclude what caused the communication issues. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates how the communication problems at the governance level of ARG and between ARG and Agro Eco hampered the OM4D project. The governance issues were seen especially as delays in essential project activities due to approval and budget constraints. Several studies report on inadequate funds for implementing adoption practices. Kabir *et al.* (2021) noted the importance of offering employees an “enabling” environment to perform their duties. Financial constraints can limit the creation of such an environment, as was observed in the OM4D project.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this case study was to evaluate communication methods used in the OM4D project and how these influence the adoption of organic farming by small-scale farmers in Northern Ghana. In a larger context, the research focus is on *communication for development*. Individualistic and psychological biases based on the Western point of view have historically influenced communication for the development and formation of related theories (Waisboard, 2020). Also, the capacity of the implementing organization was evaluated as it has a strong influence on communication. This case study offers a transparent evaluation of challenges related to communication faced in the OM4D project and uses research methods based on a

participatory approach. In this chapter, the research questions are concluded, the findings reflected on, and some recommendations are given.

6.1 How do the communication methods used in the OM4D project influence the adoption process of organic farming among small-scale farmers?

In general, the communication methods used in the OM4D project succeeded in awareness-raising and transfer of knowledge. However, as typical for interventions with a top-down linear communication approach, farmers in the OM4D project also have shortcomings concerning more profound and shared understanding. As observed in this study, the top-down approach is insufficient in producing a common understanding. Lack of shared understanding tends to cause greater resistance to change attitudes and behaviors. Also, the linear top-down approach tends to neglect the fundamental needs of farmers for them to be able to change their behavior. The findings indicate that the level of participation of the farmers in decision-making was low due to limited negotiation capacity and flexibility provided for the organizational grassroots level. The communication methods used in the OM4D project are insufficient to facilitate efficient farmers' adoption of organic farming practices. The CREMA and community capacity building and empowerment have not been sufficient to the organic cassava project to continue without outside facilitation. Also, a low sense of the ownership and commitment of the farmers was observed, which is typical for projects primarily using a top-down approach.

6.2 What is the communication structure and flow of information within the OM4D project social network?

ARG follows hierarchical communication structures limiting the flow of information. The flow of information uses a sequential structure which was observed to cause delays and distortion of information. In this kind of communication structure, issues emerge, especially when key actors in the social network are not active. Such hierarchical structures might be typical for Ghanaian organizational culture but are perceived as a challenge in this study and against IFOAM participatory approach recommendations.

6.3 What are the challenges in the communication which are hindering the adoption process?

Generally, the following challenges were found:

- Phone network constraints and long distances to the communities restricted communication
- Lack of communication between the management level of the partner organizations caused cooperation issues at the lower levels of the organizations
- Budget constraints and approvals slowed down the reaction time
- Hierarchical communication structures limited feedback and efficient bottom-up communication
- Group training and farm visits do not seem to fulfill the prerequisite for capacity building, knowledge construction, and farmers' engagement
- Lack of transparency and trust hampered problem-solving
- Conflicts within the social network influence work motivation
- Transfer of knowledge to the CISs and farmers was hampered because of the technical language used in the documents
- Lack of debating and discussion and shared communication platforms within the social network actors caused a lack of shared understanding and vision
- The sequential flow of information within the network created delays and distortion of information
- Communication methods failed to address larger socio-economic and cultural issues such as gender gaps, land use, and inter-community conflicts.

6.4 Which recommendations can be made to tackle the challenges faced, improve communication, and build organizational communication capacity based on the learnings of this research?

To improve the adoption of organic farming among the small-scale farmers in the OM4D project, focusing on higher engagement and participation of the communities is recommended. The top-down approach and group training sessions are sufficient for awareness-raising and disseminating information. However, to identify possible bottlenecks limiting farmers adopting organic farming practices and promoting farmers' engagement, it is recommended to introduce participatory methods aiming at dialogue and shared

understanding. As one limiting factor engaged in the participatory approach seemed to be the capacity and education of the project actors, the organizations could invest in training and capacity building of their employees. The ICS managers could be provided with training on conflict resolution concerning the relatively high amounts of conflict observed in this study. The author recommends including participatory communication methods in budget planning so that the field workers also have an enabling environment. It should be considered that the PGS is a more cost-effective option than the third-party certification and is also recommended by IFOAM for such projects (ifoam.bio). The contrast between the IFOAMs webpage and the reality about the OM4D project is quite considerable. Transparency and reporting of shortcomings of the project should be required.

6.5 Contributions to Communication for Development Research and Limitations

This case study contributes to the communication for development research by introducing challenges projects face at the field level. Interventions tend to use mixed communication methods from the top-down and participatory approaches. This case study demonstrates how the communication methods used in the OM4D project succeeded in some respects, such as disseminating information but are not alone sufficient to facilitate adoption. It also implies that the funding was insufficient to facilitate capacity building and empowerment of the CREMAs and communities. The results indicate that still in the 21st century capacity of development organizations restricts the establishment of interventions based on principles of participation. The attitudes of organizational actors towards the farmers' commitment indicate that despite contribution to research on the system-based approach, attitudes in the development field have not changed. Lack of adoption is mainly blamed on farmers' individual characteristics such as attitude and wrong perceptions. The socio-economic and environmental factors limiting their capacity to adopt the new practices are disregarded.

This study is limited to one project and cannot compare the relevance of different communication methods for the adoption process. Generalizations cannot be made based on this case study. Further research is needed to understand better which communication methods are suitable and cost-effective to facilitate adoption in different contexts.

Transparent analysis of communicational challenges faced by agricultural development organizations is needed to contribute to the knowledge building.

Despite all the challenges, the OM4D project should be recognized for fulfilling some needs of the farmers recording market access and information. The difference in the

engagement of farmers was observed to be different depending on the community, indicating that in some cases, the chosen communication methods were sufficient. Nevertheless, some critical challenges need to be addressed for the project to succeed in the long term.

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Appendix

Abbreviations

A/D Officer: Administration/Documentation Officer

AE: Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute

ARG: A Rocha Ghana

CIS: Community Internal Supervisor

CREMA: Community Resource Management Areas

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FGD: Focus Group Discussions

FS: Field Supervisor

GAP: Good Agricultural Practices

ICS: Internal Control System

IFOAM: International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

MC: Marketing Coach

NGO: Non-Governmental Organizations

NS' Project Manager: (A Rocha Ghana) Northern Sector's Project Manager

OM4D: Organic markets for development

PGS: Participatory Guarantee System

QMS: Quality Management System

VVC: Value-Chain Coach

Tables

Table 2: Different Communication Methods Commonly Used at Different Decision-Making Stages Of Adaptation By Moyo And Salawu (2018).

Decision making stage	Communication medias used
1) awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● field demonstrations● group training and meetings
2) persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● providing inducements such as● sample packages● achievement certificates● farm demonstrations● using local leaders● farmer field schools● training manuals
3) decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● participatory rural appraisals● look and learn tours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstration packages • field days • training manuals
4) implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual farm visits • land auditing • loan recommendations
5) confirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • result demonstrations with output comparisons • farm visits • incentivized competitions • stakeholder mobilization

Table 3: Innovation, Household, And System-Level Categories Influencing Adaptation Of Innovations By Farmer

Innovation / Intervention	Profits	Source
Relative Advantage	Multiuse value	Amare, and Darr, 2020.
	The time span of obtaining benefits	
	Labor Demand	
	Opportunity Cost of Labor	
	Rivalry with immediate needs	
	Compatibility with current livelihoods	
	Implementation Cost	
	Complexity	
	Trialability	
	Observability	
Household / Environment	Age	Abdulai, Abdul-Rahaman, and Issahaku, 2021
	Gender	
	Education	
	Household size	
	Household goals	
	Livelihood strategy	
	Financial resources	
	Household	
	Farm Size	Tafesse et al. 2021

System-level Features	Environment	Social Capital	Amare, and Darr, 2020.
		Temperature	Oyetunde-Usman,
		Precipitation	Olagunju, and
		Soil Fertility	Ogunpaimo, 2021
		Location	Baah-Ofori, and
	Access to Information	Availability of Extension Services	Abdulai, Abdul-Rahaman, and
		Social Networks	Issahaku, 2021
		Access to Resources & Farm Inputs	Adolph et al. 2021
		Market Price	
		Market Availability	
	Markets	Distance to Market Centers	
		Access to Credit	Abdulai, Abdul-Rahaman, and
		Non-farm Employment	Issahaku, 2021
		Synergies between land use	Adolph et al. 2021
		Land ownership	
System-level Features	Institutional	Laws & Regulations	Amare, and Darr, 2020.
		Existence of other Development Projects	Lambrecht, and
		Norms and Values	Ragasa, 2018
		Traditions	Anibaldi et al. 2021
		Political Situation	
	Cultural / Social	Power Hierarchies	
		Storage Facilities	Cook, Satizábal, and
		Roads	Curnow, 2021
		Healthcare Facilities	
		Schools	
		Processing Facilities	

Table 4: Development Communication and Organizational Network Capacity Categories

Factor evaluated	Defined as
Physical/technological ease of sending and receiving messages	· Which communication channels are used?
	· Issues faced with the available/chosen communication channels
Top-to-down communication vs. Participatory approach	· Was persuasion used?
	· Valuation of expert knowledge vs. valuation of local knowledge
	· Transfer of information vs. dialogue
	· Decision making externally vs. at community level
	· Development workers role as transferring information vs. as facilitators of dialogue
Organizational network capacity	· Sense of ownership of the project
	· Clear vision and mission
	· Transparent use of funds
	· Coordinated efforts
	· Management and dynamic leadership of the network
	· Communication of strategic plan
	· Communication in the local language
	· Timely communication
	· Trust between network members
	· Human and physical Resources
	· Funding

Table 5: List of Communities Observed During The Research

Name	Mognori	Murugu	Kpulumbu	Bawena	Wawato	Gurubago	Average	Source
Distance to Damongo	40 min	50 min	1 hour 20 min	1 hour 40 min	3 hours	3 hours 30 min	2 hours 10 mins	Google Maps
Year of joining	2021	2019	2019	2019	2021	2020		Farm Register
Experience in Cassava Farming	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		FGD
Population (2018)	308	106	370	1350	500	550	531	Baseline survey, 2018
Number of Households	75	165	42	150	80	71	97	Baseline survey, 2019
Number of registered farmers 2020		48	30	41	41	105	53	Updated Farmers List Audited 2020
% of Female Farmers		26 %	10 %	22 %		80 %	35 %	Farmer's registration 2020, ARG Records
% of Farmers Who Planted Cassava		67 %	67 %	49 %	29 %	60 %	54 %	Updated Farmers List Audited 2020

% Of Farmers who sold Organic Cassava 2021		38 %	60 %	44 %			47 %	Purchasing lists, ARG records
Purchased cassava ships in tones		5,962	2,075	2,833			3,623	Purchasing lists
GHC received by the farmers		7140	2487	3394			4340	Purchasing lists
OM4D Inputs		Mill	Mill, motorbike, tricycle	Motorbike, tricycle				Observations
Number of CIS	1	2	2	3	3	3		Observations

Table 6: The Observed Agro Eco -Louis Bolk Institute and A Rocha Ghana Team Members

Name	Role	Background
Boudewijn Van Elzaker	Director of Agro Eco – Louis Bolk Institute and project initiator	BSc., Tropical Agriculture, Crop Protection. Year of experience in organic agriculture and development work. From the Netherlands.
Ernestina Mensah-Pebi	Value-Chain Coach (VVC), Agro Eco – Louis Bolk Institute	BSc. Natural Resource Management & BSc., Renewable Natural Resource Management, Agroforestry option. From Ghana.
Francesca Doe	Marketing Coach (MC), Agro Eco – Louis Bolk Institute	MS, Oil and Gas Management & BA, Law Director of Green Acres Farms Ltd. From Ghana.
Kalipha Jammeh	Field supervisor, Agro Eco – Louis Bolk Institute	BSc., Crisis/Emergency/Disaster Management Started in the OM4D Project as an intern but was later hired as a field supervisor.
Godwin Dzekoto	Sectoral Manager, A Rocha Ghana	MPhil, Environmental and Resource Management & BSc Natural Resource Management, Wildlife and Range Management. Worked for ARG since 2012.
Seidu Pasor	ICS Manager A Rocha Ghana	Originally from Mognori, one of the villages around Mole National Park. Worked in tourism before employment at ARG Ghana.
Rita Tikaha	(Assisting) ICS Manager A Rocha Ghana	BSc in Natural Resource Management. Freshly hired at a Rocha. From Ghana.

Table 7: List of the OM4D and a Rocha Team Members Interviews

Name	Date	Length (min)	Location	Interview type	Type of recording
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Kalipah Jammeh	1.6.2021	12:55	Damongo, a Rocha Office	Semi- structured	Audio
	19.6.2021	4:30			
	30.6.2021	3:30			
	1.7.2021	10:00			
Seidu Pasor	18.6.2021	30:00:00		Unstructured	Audio
Godwin Dzekoto	18.6.2021	17:00		Unstructured	
Ernestina Mensah- Pebi	23.6.2021	9:40		Semi- structured	
Francesca Doe	24.6.2021	14:30		Semi- structured	

Table 8: List Of The Ciss Interviews

Name	Role	Date	Length (min)	Location	Interview type	Type of recording
Samuel W Moshei	CIS	26.6.2021		Murugu		Notes
Seidu A Wahab	CIS	26.6.2021				
Yussif Mohammed	CIS, teacher	30.6.2021	21.48	Gurubago	Semi- structured	Audio
Yussif Malik	CIS	30.6.2021				
Abubakari A Aziz	CIS	30.6.2021				
Saibu Iddrisu	CIS, teacher	2.7.2021	21:00			

Abubakari A Aziz	CIS, teacher	2.7.2021	6:41	Bawena
Jebuni Manan	CIS	9.7.2021	15:00	
Issah Yakubu	CIS, CREMA member, teacher	9.7.2021	14:35	Kpulumbo

Table 9: List Of The Farmers Focus Group Discussions

Community	Date	Length (hr:min)	Translator	Number of Participants		
				Male	Female	Total
Murugu	25.6.2021	0:45	Samuel W. Moshi (CIS)	17	6	23
Gurubago	30.6.2021	0:35	Yussif Malik (CIS)	5	20	25
Bawena	2.7.2021	1:50	Issahaku Alhassan	18	5	23
Kpulumbo	9.7.2021	1:30	Zackaria Philip	19	2	21
Total				59	33	92

Table 10: List Of The Discussion Of Results Focus Group Discussions

Date	Length	Location	Type of Recording	Participants
29.7.2021	1:53:44	Damongo, ARG office	Audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Godwin Dzekoto ● Seidu Pasor ● Rita Tikaha ● Kalipah Jammeh
30.7.2021	1:47:26			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yussif Mohammed ● Abubakari A. Aziz ● Shaibu Iddrisu ● Issah Yakubu ● Teburi Manan ● Samuel W. Mushie ● Seidu Abdul Wahab

5.8.2021	2:49:19	Online, Zoom meeting	Zoom video record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bo Van Elzaker • Ernestina Mensah-Pebi
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Table 11: The OM4D Activity Plan March-August

March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting Starts • Sensitization and registration of new members • Farmers training by the CIS on internal organic standards topic: production (Land preparation & planting)
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting and registration of farmers continues
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting ends • ICS Managers training (online) • CIS training on internal organic standards topic: farm maintenance
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal inspection training
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIS training by ICS Managers, topic: effective field monitoring
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIS training, topic: processing • Farmers training by the CIS, topic: processing

Table 12: Responsibilities Of Marketing Coach, Value-Chain Coach, Internal Control System Managers, And Internal Community Supervisors

TITLE	RESPONSIBILITIES	SOURCE
Marketing Coach (MC)	<p>Quality control of the organic cassava chips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for ensuring the product meets national & international standards for edible cassava chips/flour • In conjunction with the ICS Lead, developing and implementing training on HACCP protocols to ensure food safety and hygiene throughout production process • Advising on product applications, best uses and market expectations • Product research, testing and development • Guidance on pre to post harvest activities to increase productivity and minimize losses • Training farmers on processing requirements and product specifications <p>Sales and marketing</p>	<p>Doe, email Feb 19, 2:39 PM</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for all marketing and sales activities, from lead generation through contract closing • Participating in exhibitions, fairs and trade shows • Development of marketing material • In conjunction with Lead VC expert: price setting, price negotiation • Sales agreements with customers as well as managing customer relationships. • Developing new sales leads and converting into sales • Customer relations management 	
Value-Chain Coach (VVC)	PGS and Capacity Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS establishment on organic regulation requirements for the group. • Coaching, Sensitization, trainings, and capacity building of ICS Team on organic practices. • Monitoring the work of the ICS managers. • Ensuring improvement on agronomic practices on organic fields 	Mensah-Pebi, email, Feb 24, 2:02 PM
ICS Managers	Internal Control System Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate training, internal inspections and buying of organic produce. • Communication with the CIS (Community Internal Supervisors) and monitoring their work. • ICS Documentation upkeep – farmer list, contract, training & internal inspection records, etc. 	
CIS	Community Internal Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between OM4D team and the farmers • Farm inspections • Training and records keeping for farmers 	

Table 13: Division of Responsibilities Damongo Office Team

ICS Manager & Field Supervisor	ICS Manager (assisting)	Intern
Registration of farmers	The 15 th of May	• Facilitating the planting of secondary crops
Farmers' contract signing		• Facilitating the harvesting of secondary crops
Completion of cassava planting	May/June	

Field visits		-August /	● Farm sketching of
CIS internal standards training	May/June	September	secondary crops
Internal inspections supervising	June/July	● External	● Farmer's
Risk assessment	June	audit/certificate	registration
Record keeping training	June	● Cassava	updates,
Farmers' training		harvesting	secondary crops
Sketching of farms	By June		
Early planting experiment			

Table 14: List of Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) and Related Activity

Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs)						
	Communities	Women shea collection group	Village savings and loans association (VSLA)	Beekeeping groups	Farmers Groups	Source
Area division	Murugu- Mognori	yes	yes	yes	Sweet potato, cashew, and maize	Jammeh, 2021 (citation from pp. 66)
	Yazori- Kumbo	yes	yes	yes		
	Bawena- Kpulumbo	yes	yes	yes		
	Gurubagu- Wawato	yes	yes	yes		
Community members involvement in CREMAs	Local Community Resource Management Committees (CRMCS) in each community steer the affairs of the CREMA.					
	12% were Committee members					
	19% were involved in an intervention					
	69% were regular members					
"The Crema is responsible for looking after community land."						

Table 15: List of Farmer's Contract Signing Dates

Farmers Contract Signing			
Date	Community	Organized by	Comments
26.5.2021	Kpulumbo	Intern & Assisting ICS Manager	• Farmers do not have their own copy of the contract; CIS is left an example contract.
28.5.2021	Murugu		• The language used in the contract is not possible to understand for the farmers, or often even for the CIS.
31.5.2021	Gurubago		• The whole contract is not explained, and especially the parts of ARG responsibilities are easily left out.
1.6.2021	Wawato		• Farmers are not informed well about their own rights.
2.6.2021	Bawena		
4.6.2021	Mognori		

Table 16: List of training sessions done between March and July 2021

Name of training	Date	Location	Participants	Done by
CIS Training on production	20.5.2021	Murugu	Murugu CIS Kpulumbo CIS	Intern & Assisting ICS Manager
CIS Training on production	24.5.2021	Damongo	Wawato CIS Gurubago CIS Wawato CIS Bawena CIS Mongori CIS	Intern & Assisting ICS Manager
Internal Inspection Training	22.6.2021	Wawato & Gurubago	Gurubago CIS (x2) Wawato CIS (x2)	VC Coach

Table 17: Results of the OM4D Project Communities' Household, Innovation, and System-level Characteristics

	Categories	Results of the OM4D Project Communities Characteristics
Household and environmental context (Baseline Survey, Van Elzakker 2018)	Household livelihood strategies	Rain-fed agriculture
	Livelihood risks management	Youth migrating into cities
	Poverty	Typical
	Competition of OCF with immediate livelihood needs	Yes, competition with other farming activities especially in the early rainy season.
	Opportunity cost of labor during the OCF activities	High, early planting season labor is engaging in planting of other crops.
	Land ownership	based on ancestral traditions, such as patrilineal lineages or permission from the community chief. Women need permission from their husbands to access farming land. In common farmers have trust in their right to use the land currently in their use.
	Household composition	Average: 1 man, 1,5 wife, 2 children
	Household head	Typically, male headed.
	Education	Low, typically primary school is not completed.
	Literacy level	Over 70% cannot read or write
	Mathematics	Over 20% are not capable of calculating revenue from sales

Household ambitions	household: electricity, better house, and education for children; crop income: better prices for crops, soil fertility, access to means of transport and irrigation; cash income: higher income for the family, and savings; food consumption: more choice of food for the family
Access to credit & financial sources	An NGO-supported saving-group facility exists in the communities, but limited access to credits is still observed. It is common for farmers to borrow money from relatives living in the city (Jammeh, 2021).
Transportation options	Motorbikes (50% of households), CREMA's have tricycles.
Climate conditions	The northern region of Ghana has a tropical savanna climate with an average temperature of 28,4°C and annual precipitation of 893mm (en.climate-data.org). There are two seasons, the rainy (typically from April to October) and the dry season (typically from November to March) (Mole National Park Website).
Vegetation	In the year 2013, the most significant part of Mole was covered in grasses with shrub/herbaceous vegetations (26%) and open savannah woodland (23%) (Dakwa, 2019).
Environmental risks	Due to the heavy rains and deforestation, the landscape suffers from erosion. Due to floods, the communities might also be unreachable during August (Jammeh, 2021).
Location of farm	Bush farms

Socio-economic and cultural characteristics	Social Groups	Gonjas most dominant but also Tampulma, Mamprusi, Hanga, Dagomba and Fulani ethnic groups are present (baseline survey, 2018)
Socio-economic and cultural characteristics	Local languages	Hanga, tampula, mampruli, dagbani, and fula. Some farmers can speak twi and little English (Baseline Survey, Van Elzaker 2018).
	Religions	Dominant religion is Islam (over 50%) followed by Christianity.
	Political allocation	There are two political parties in Ghana.
	Available extension services	The communities have limited access to extension services. According to an agricultural extension agent, farmers sometimes feel that extension officers are deceiving them (Jammeh, 2021). A Rocha is the only organization persistently working in the communities around the Mole national park.
	Social networks	A Community Resource Management Association (CREMA) is responsible for taking care of the community land by setting up constitutions and distributing common resources (e.g., tricycles). CREMA's activity level and effectiveness are different between the communities.
	Access to resources & farm inputs	Farm households tend to be self-sustainable in many aspects. Planting material is collected from the previous harvest, and only excess farm products are sold (Midterm Survey, 2021 unpublished). Some farmers have difficulties finding cassava planting sticks.
	Market price	Cassava market price fluctuates. It was recorded to be 30 cedi/100kg in 2018 and 200 cedi/100kg 2021. Organic cassava farmers are provided with price premiums.

Market availability	There were no markets for cassava 2018 (Baseline Survey, Van Elzakker 2018). The market availability fluctuates strongly.
Distance to market centers	The communities are remote from any market centers, and the infrastructure is poor (Jammeh, 2021).
Conflicts between land use	Conflicts about land use and uncertainties are in common related to the cattle grazing areas (Jammeh, 2021). The farmers feel that cassava is especially vulnerable regarding the cattle because it is in the field during the dry season when the food for cattle is limited. The cassava is also dried in the farms, and sometimes the cattle eat already harvested cassava (Pöytäniemi, 2021).
Land ownership	Landownership is based on ancestral traditions, such as patrilineal lineages or permission from the community chief. Women need permission from their husbands to access farming land (Jammeh, 2021). According to the data collected during the midterm survey (2021), farmers in common had no distrust regarding their rights to access the farming land they had currently in use.
Policies	Ghana has a national agricultural investment plan with good-sounding policy aims. However, the implementation of the policies is poor. In general, the communities feel that the government has no interest in helping them.
Existence of other development projects	Yes, e.g., honey, shea nut picking, tree nursery, groundnut, and cashew farming promoted by a Rocha through the CREMAs.

	Norms, values and traditions	It is forbidden to kill economic trees such as shea and dawadawa. Traditionally communities practice slash-and-burn agriculture.
	Gender roles	women typically engage more in household work
	Power hierarchies	Chiefs' deceit about land usage (Jammeh 2021, Dzekoto 29.7.2021).
	Storage facilities	Yes, for shea and cassava.
	Roads	In a poor condition.
	Healthcare facilities	In one of the communities.
	Schools	The communities have schools for children between 2-12 years, but there is, in general, a lack of teachers. One teacher might be responsible for over 200 students (Jammeh, 2021).
	Processing facilities	Cassava mills in two of the communities
The innovation	Profitability	OCF was calculated to be the most profitable crop for the farmers (baseline survey, 2018). Most farmers perceive that this is true (Pöytäniemi, 2021)
The innovation	Multiuse value	Cassava is a common staple food and through the OM4D project also a cash crop. .
	Maturation period	Longer than other crops (1-1,5 years)
	Labor demand	OF and processing is perceived to have higher labor demands (Pöytäniemi, 2021).
	Compatibility with current livelihoods	OF is not compatible with slash-and-burn agriculture.
	Implementation cost	Relatively cheap, highest cost from land preparation if hiring labor is necessary.

Complexity	Processing is perceived more complicated than the traditional methods (Pöytäniemi, 2021)
Trialability	The threshold for joining is relatively low.
Observability	Some farmers observed that the profits from OCF were good, but some did not pay attention to their profits.

Table 18: Gender Gap in the Mole Organic Landscape Communities

		Source
Challenges faced regarding farming	poor road to access market	Jammeh, 2021
	over exploitation by middlemen	
	Women are vulnerable to rape if they are at the bush farms alone.	
Dependency on men regarding land preparation		Pöytäniemi, 2021
Crops farmed by women	Bambara beans	Jammeh, 2021
	Maize	
	pepper	
	cassava	
	okra	
groundnut		
Land ownership	"Women can only own land after being allocated by their husbands or male-headed household members."	Jammeh, 2021, pp. 29
Negotiation Power	"Women do not have the capacity to effect so much change in the community because they have little say in decision making compared to men. What she does is to organize women to advise their husbands at household level about the dangers of cutting down trees and how that affects the livelihood."	Citation from "women leader" Jammeh, 2021, pp. 68
Livelihood Strategy	Women are generally practicing subsistence agriculture for household use. Women depend on farming and shea nut collection to take care of their families. The women wanted to increase agricultural production for extra income and other household uses.	Jammeh, 2021

Labor	"The most important thing for the farmers is the woman how to get labor and be able to raise the mounts. They can clear the land but how to raise the mounts. Sometimes they will hire labor, and the people will take the money and refuse to go."	INTW CIS Gurubago
	"Through the information for a Rocha to the farmers, some of the farmers are taking it seriously, but the challenge is that some of them like the women they are suffering from the farming. They don't weed themselves; they take labor. Sometimes it is very difficult for them to get the labor for weeding. So that's one challenge."	INTW CIS Gurubago

Table 19: Financial Constrains of the Farmers

	Source
"What he is saying is that where we are farming in the community is far. So before you do the harvesting, you have to send people to the farm to peel the cassava. Like if they peel the cassava, that is the laborers, so if they buy it at a low price, where do you even get money to pay the laborers is a problem. You always run at a loss. Because if you take the money out of it, they didn't even buy the bags they don't want, and you always run at a loss."	FGD Bawena
"What he is saying is that with the cassava farming initially with a Rocha we discussed that it is going to be, help me, and I will help you. It is going to, like if you didn't spray there and when it is time for weeding if you take laborers to weed the cassava, the amount that they will charge you, the money is always more than if you buy chemicals. So, if a Rocha is always ready that they will help us, so when it is time for weeding if they always knew that they could help us with some money, then we sill weed inside. It is because we don't have money sometimes, this small money, you think it is not enough to get laborers to weed the cassava. It will force you to buy chemicals and weed inside. So, what he is saying is that if there is an agreement that when it is the time for weeding, maybe if the a Rocha is ready to help us with some money, then maybe we can get laborers to a week inside. And when you are doing the selling maybe you can also detract the money, they used to help you out of the price. That one is always good, but there is no help like that. That one makes them always they will start weeding normally, and in the end, they will go and spray inside. That is because they can't get money and get laborers to weed inside. They can't also weed alone; sometimes that makes them also use the spray."	
"So, let's assume that there is help from a Rocha and if they are able to farm in a large quantity and they harvest more, at the end of the year, those who are not part of a Rocha will see that a Rocha has benefit, they will see that the whole community will like to join a Rocha. But because there is no help	

like that people will, others will always laugh at them that a Rocha a Rocha, there is not anything out of it. So sometimes that is what makes them feel relaxed. Assume that there is help and the whole community sees that if you join a Rocha at the end of the year, you also make more harvest you will see that people would like to join a Rocha. But sometimes the help is not coming."	
"They just keep emphasizing on the weeding that how to get money and hire labor to do the weeding."	FGD Gurubago
"So, when it is time for weeding, they don't get support, or they don't get any money so that the people can go and weed the place for them. So because of that, they can't farm as big as they want to farm. They always farm small, what they can take care of. They cannot farm big because they are alone; they cannot get any help."	FGD Kpulumbo
"My brother is saying that the only problem they are facing is a money problem, they use the money to work, and if that time reaches and they don't have money, they can't go and weed."	
"The women too are given an idea, that the way the man can work, they cannot work like that, so they need money to do the work."	
"sometimes you beg them to plant early, but they can't plant early simply because there is not enough money, especially the lady, the women. They rely on men to weed, to clear their land before they're able to. So sometimes these people, some of them will even take the money, and they are delaying before they go. And sometimes you won't even have the money to give them."	INTVW CIS Gurubago

Table 20: The OM4D Project Details

	The OM4D Project Design		Source
Organizations Involved	IFOAM - Organics International	Implementing partner of Agro Eco-Louis Bolk Institute at an international level.	Baseline survey 2018 &
	Agro Eco-Louis Bolk Institute	Acts as an advisor of a Rocha for the OM4D project.	Project Fact Sheet
	a Rocha Ghana	Capacity building of a Rocha.	
		A Rocha staff who in turn will build the capacity of the CREMAs to train the farmers in good	2019

agricultural and associated good environmental practices (GAP and GEP).

Objective	The overall goal of the project is that organic farming and related markets systems enable smallholder farmers to improve their living conditions.	
Project	Duration	November 2017 to October 2021
Details	Funding	the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.
	Total budget	Euros 2.75million (in 4 countries for 4 years)
	Location	Ghana, Mole National Park (other countries are Burkina Faso, Togo, São Tomé & Príncipe).
	Certification	Formal Third-Party Certification
	Approach	market based intervention
	Organic Crop	Cassava
Key Indicator s	Have 3,000 smallholder farmers involved in the cassava-based farming system and a similar number, mainly women, in its communal processing; doubling their income.	
	Farming in an environment with good natural resource management	
	Have 40 cassava value chain actors and 2 value chain coaches trained by 2020	
	Organic cassava sold locally but majority exported to US and Europe	
Decision making	Following a national workshop in January 2017, it was decided that a focus on the cassava farming and marketing system would have the most significant impact on the country's smallholder farmers and their families.	
	"A Rocha brought the market for cassava. Before their cassava which they did not consume would get rotten in the store because there was no market"	CIS, Murugu, 25.6.2020

	"They were having cassava, but whenever they would peel cassava, it would just stay and rot. When a Rocha saw this, they said that it is very bad and said they will find someone to buy the cassava. A Rocha said they will find a higher price for the organic cassava".	FGD, Murugu, 25.6.2021
Key Activities	training the farmers	Baseline survey 2018 & Project Fact Sheet 2019
	establishing Internal Control (ICS)	
	establishing Quality Management Systems (QMS)	
	organizing the purchase, logistics and storage,	
	focusing on developing the market	
Documents	Mole Organic Landscape Enterprise – Mole Project 2021 Action Plan	Observations
	Mole Organic Landscape Enterprise Internal Standard Rules	
	Mole Organic Landscape Enterprise Baseline survey October 2018	

Table 21: Mobile Phone Network Coverage Issues of the Communities

Citation/notes	Source
"For the communication, I think for the CIS the (phone) network is a problem. The network is actually a problem for the communication to a Rocha"	Yussif M., 30.6.2021
"Our communication too, sometimes we are facing some challenges a lot. The call, SMS, sometimes we need to hear about your, how healthy are you or something like that. So even if you are there, have you seen calling you, because of lack of network."	Saibu I., 2.7.2021
"Here our challenge is we don't have a network. If you want to talk to a Rocha, if they are not in the community and you want to talk to them,	Issah Y., 9.7.2021

<p>unless you take a long, you take two three hours before you can be able to make a call, so the network is our challenge."</p>	
<p>"It is only some of the communities where these problems come from. For example, Kpulumbo has a very bad network. If I send information, for Bawena and Kpulumbo it takes a whole two days."</p>	<p>Pasor, 29.7.2021</p>
<p>"so what I learned is that Kpulumbo for instants newer has network, so it has to go first through Bawena before it gets to Kpulumbo."</p>	<p>Mensah-Pebii, 5.8.2021</p>
<p>"Bawena they were sent a text message, called, but because of lack of network, you cannot make direct communication, they are not easily available. That was a challenge. So SMS was sent to them, but they didn't reply, so most of them (the CIS) went to their own business, which I could respect, but it would have been better if they were there and then you know, we could efficiently do what we were supposed to do"</p>	<p>Jammeh, 1.7.2020</p>
<p>"On our side, I think the communication was sent early but because of the lack of network and that sometimes is a big challenge in transmitting the information. Yea that is what happened this week."</p>	<p>Jammeh, 1.7.2021</p>
<p>"The second thing is we have network problems in our communities. At the time that I have information from Accra, whoever is passing to me about coming to the communities tomorrow, or next week for an engagement. Maybe I will be able to tell them just that morning when the project needs to be done. So I talk to the farmers like ou okay, talk to the Mr,... This morning, I was supposed to call you yesterday but I couldn't, but we are coming today. You get there the project will fail. The communication hasn't passed there at the right time. So, the network is one communication, getting from one party to the other one is also a great challenge."</p>	<p>Pasor, 18.6.2021</p>

Table 22: Language Barriers

Citation/notes	Source
"The local languages are the following: hanga for the Hangas, tampulma - the Tampulmas, mampruli – the Mamprusi, dagbani - the Dagomba, fula - the Fulani. This causes a certain ethnic division in the villages unless migrants learn the main language. Some speak the Twi, which is the lingua franca. Little English is spoken."	Van Elzakker, 2018, baseline survey
"Due to language barriers the information provided by the interpreter could be distorted and misrepresented."	Jammeh, 2021 pp. 29
The CISs were not able to explain terms such as "ecological cycles" and "precaution"	FGD, CIS, 30.7.2021
"This was in the internal standards, but also fraise in different ways in English and then you can also always wonder how this is translated to local understanding."	Van Elzakker, 5.8.2021
"You know sometimes, the way you are speaking, your English sometimes I don't understand it. So unless you speak for us in three words so we understand it."	CIS, Kpulumbo, 9.7.2021

Table 23: Discussion and Observations about Tree Removal

What the ICS Manual states about trees:	Source
"Where the farmer needs to clear a new plot of land, trees present must be left on the land."	
"In clearing land for production, bigger trees and some form of natural vegetation shall be left on parts of the land to regulate the temperature in the farm."	
What the farmers contract states about trees:	
"Where feasible, some trees should also be planted in the fields"	
"Farmers are encouraged to intercrop their fields and should introduce fruit trees within their fields. At least every acre of land must have 10 trees."	
"Growing of leguminous trees is encouraged in the project."	
What the farmers say about trees:	

It is culturally forbidden to kill economic trees such as Shea or Dawadawa	Jammeh (2021)
"You see, at first, they started, but they did not have this kind of knowledge. But when you people came now, they all agreed that they shouldn't kill the trees."	FGD Kpulumbo
"They are saying that where they are going to plant the cassava, they are not burning any tree there."	
"A Rocha people said that they should be planting trees on their farms, and they are giving the trees, and they are still planting on the farm. They gave them cashews and all kinds of trees, and they are planting."	
"A Rocha people say that when we go weed someplace, we can leave like five trees or ten. When the trees are not there, we can plant trees in the field."	INTVW CIS Kpulumbo
"In a place, a land where there is not enough green, we encourage them to plant more trees on their cassava farm if there are no trees there. We encourage them to plant cashew and other trees you can plant."	INTVW CIS Gurubago
What Agro Eco says about trees:	FGD Agro Eco
"That is how you can learn that a simple thing, or one sentence, or one sentence in the internal standards, can go completely out of control. As I remember, the discussion started with had when farmers are opening a new field, they should not kill the shea trees. Because in the project there is also a shea collection. So, farmers should maintain the shea trees. Later that was translated as not economical trees; farmers should not remove economic trees. This was in the internal standards, but also fraise in different ways in English, and then you can also always wonder how this is translated to local understanding. So, there is also an aspect of non-burning. Sometimes cutting of the trees was combined with the burning of the trees, so we came to the burning of the trees, that farmers should not burn the trees and forgot about the cutting of the trees. Anyway, in organic agriculture, we think in agroecology and also in agroforestry even, and that means that organic farmers, it's quite common to have in this climate to have the trees, to have certainly higher trees. I can imagine that farmers will remove shrubs that are standing in the way and are useless, but the higher once and certainly the economic trees should be kept. And this has been milling around, and then	

you also bump in, let's say the local knowledge or the local habit, when you are a good farmer you clean, you open your field and that means you kill the trees. Which I think by nowadays knowledge about the environment and the changing of the climate is a completely wrong practice. Even if it is a centuries-old practice, I think it is high time it is forbidden, especially for organic farmers. Then this whole discussion of this, farmers should be told that when they are removing higher trees from the farm, they are not organic farmers. So, this is discussed, and people say yes, we tell the farmers not to cut the trees and continue, and me hearing after one year that farmers will continue cutting off the trees, and that means we are not looking at an organic project anymore." (Van Elzakker)

"With the tree removal, it is quite challenging. I don't know why compared to last year we see more of the trees removed; I don't know if it is because of the new farmers who are coming in, or instead of just telling them to stop that they cannot bend the trees because they were giving a reason that they have to remove the trees to reduce the shade. And in the contract also which was reviewed several times before we agreed on we settled on the content of the contract we agreed that they would maintain some trees. So no, that it came so much burning all around it is almost of (?) of to stop them from doing it. Now, if you say that nobody should remove the trees or they are not organic farmers, then there is no organic farmer virtually in the community. So that is why I was looking for a way that we can let them have the importance of these trees and as well as do their organic farming that they cannot remove the trees by burning the base. We even mentioned this branch removal, and the tree will broach again, but if they kill the tree completely with burning, it is big damage to the whole environment. That is why I said that we don't tell them that we should not remove the trees, but they should maintain more trees." (Mensah-Pebi)

Author's Observations about trees:

Field visits 20-28th of March 2021 signs of burning of trees. The author perception the AE's Directors instructions is that organic farmers are not allowed to kill trees from their fields. The CIS expressed that they have

difficulties convincing the farmers to not kill the trees as they don't want the trees to shade the cassava.	
"This knowledge should be transferred to the CIS for their community trainings with farmers. No burning, farms with less than 10 trees should plant trees. Removal of trees should not be mentioned. The situation can be checked by CIS/ ICS officers where the need be to remove trees."	VC Coach email 18.5.2021, 6,19pm
Field visits 6-8.5.2021: During the training, VCC was insisting that no trees should be killed. The CIS and farmers insisted that if they do not kill the trees the cassava doesn't grow well but VCC keeps insisting that no trees should be killed.	
Farmers have been encouraged to plant leguminous trees (e.g. in the contract) but have not been told which trees are leguminous. Also, the ICS managers do not know which local trees are leguminous. E.g., the cultural economic tree dawadawa is leguminous.	
4.6.:2021 Contract Signing Mognori farmers refuse to accept that they are not allowed to kill trees and even find it amusing.	
22.6.2021 Gurubago CIS is questioning if farmers in Europe agree not to remove trees from their fields.	
23.6.2021 Visit and farm Registration Mognori: Some farmers had cleared their farms by burning trees. One farmer justifies it by saying that the tree is poisonous and prevents crops from growing around it (allelopathic?). VCC explains the benefits of trees. With the benefits of trees, she is talking about protecting nature and wildlife. Statements such as that no fertilizer is needed when the trees are kept on the field are mentioned. Direct benefits for the farmer such as e.g., soil microorganisms' protection, soil water retention, prevention of erosion is not mentioned and long-term sustainability benefiting the grandchildren of the farmers are not mentioned.	

Table 24: Roads and Distance to the Mole Organic Landscape Communities

Citation/notes	Source
"the major challenge with communication engaging with the farmers one is also proximity "	Mensah-Pebi, 23.6.2021
"On the second point there is the CIS getting a late notice for their activities one other item that caused the proximity to the Damngo to the village."	Mensah-Pebi, 5.8.2021
"The roads to the communities are very poor"	Jammeh, 2021 pp. 14
"According to an Agric extension agent the challenges faced by the department is infrastructure(roads) and finances. Around August it is difficult to reach the farming communities due to floods."	Jammeh, 2021 pp. 33
"The farmers would like to use tractors on their farm but due to poor road network during raining season the road become inaccessible for tractors and motors."	Jammeh, 2021 pp. 45
"the challenges of farming in the community are limited access to markets, poor road conditions"	Jammeh, 2021 pp. 73
"The trunk road is very sandy at places (or muddy in the wet season)"	Van Elzakker, 2018, baseline survey, pp. 17
But what I want us to do is, you see, I am a field worker, and I receive most of the challenges; they come to me. Traveling from Damango to any of the communities is a bit of, not just a kilometer. I think you have equally the knowledge. Sometimes you can travel for three or four hours to just to the community. So, leaving the house very early and coming home very late is another challenge for us.	Pasor, 18.6.2021

Transcripts

CIS Interviews

INTERVIEWS WITH MURUGU CIS

CIS nr. 1

Question 1. Positive Aspects

CIS: A Rocha supported whenever they are going for inspections. Whenever they go for inspections, they would inform the farmers, and the farmer would give the go-ahead to come.

CIS: A Rocha would support them with the fuel.

CIS: When something is wrong, the CIS educates the farmer.

CIS: This has worked.

Question 2. Challenges

CIS: They have been told to plant early, but because of certain things, the early planting has not been done.

CIS: And farmers are always complaining that especially harvesting time, they need the tricycle to transport their produce to the facility. It is a big challenge to the farmers and to us, the CIS as well. We, the CIS, do not have a motorbike to do our work. It is a big challenge for us.

CIS: Me: was it told to you in the beginning that you would be given a motorbike?

CIS: Yes, they told us, but it has not been given. It was the only food they brought. They gave the motorbikes only to the two other communities, and we were left out.

CIS: So, the farmers too are always complaining that anytime they want to buy their products, the price should be a bit higher than how it was last year.

A: so, when the issue with the pricing came, and they were supposed to harvest, did they harvest?

CIS: Some harvested, and some refused to harvest. Cause some preferred the conventional selling to the organic because they said the price for the conventional one is higher. Those who did not harvest are more than those who harvested. We were expected 40 farmers to harvest, but only 18 farmers were able to harvest.

CIS: In common, you as a CIS, of course, know all the organic farming practices. Do you also think the farmers know them?

CIS: Yes, they know.

CIS: and are they practicing them?

CIS: Yes, they are.

A: do they understand the benefits also?

CIS: Yes.

A: And the communication from A Rocha, are you satisfied with it?

CIS: Yes, we are, but not all. Because of what we were promised, not all the promises were fulfilled. We were told that we would be given a motorbike and a tricycle for the transportation of the produce. But they have not been provided.

A: How has this influenced your relationship with A Rocha? Has it influenced you; do you feel different about them?

CIS: Yes, of course. Cause in common, finally what I have seen all that they have promised to do, all has not been fulfilled.

CIS: They should try to provide us with the motorbike, and if a new harvesting season comes, they should try to give a price higher than it was before.

CIS: Our allowance, we were told that every month we would be given some, but now what they are giving us they say fuel allowance, so we don't understand it whether it is the fuel allowance, or it is a monthly payment they are giving us, that one we don't know, we don't

understand what is happening. We were told that every month they would pay us something. But now, whenever they give us money, they say it is for fuel.

CIS Nr. 2

CIS: If you look at us, as to how the work was in the beginning but now it is falling down. We have been giving some issues that should also be??? (solved)

CIS: First of all we told them that they should give us (rubber) boots because we are always going to the farms and wearing these kinds of shoes (sandals) are not allowed. But up to date, they have still not given us.

A: did they agree to give them to you?

CIS: Yes.

P: when did they agree?

CIS: Since the work started. (Talked with the ICS Manager and previous ICS Manager)

CIS: If you look at the way the work is now, some of the farmers are serious, but they are not interested because they said that if we also give our effort to produce the organic cassava, the buying will be higher than local price. But if you look at it, the price of the local one is now higher than the organic one. That is why some of them don't speak to us.

A: can you come up with an ideal situation how A Rocha should have gone about these issues?

CIS: What I observe is that what they tell us what we should do, we normally do it better, but whenever we give them our problems, it's like they don't have time for us.

CIS: They should always do what we ask them.

A: maybe it's not whatever they ask you but what they promised?

CIS: Yes, and even if it comes up that you cannot give it anymore, let the person know that it has happened, and that's why so we also have more hope for that. And if you look at all the communities Kpulumbo and Bawena, they have their motorbikes ready. When you look at Murugu here, we have more farmers than everybody in organic farming. But they don't take care of us.

A: Did they come and explain why you didn't get the motorbike?

CIS: No, they did not.

A: So, you do not understand why you did not get the motorbike, but the others did?

CIS: No, we don't even know the reason why the motorbike is not given to us.

After the interview, the CIS wanted to add one more thing sometimes a Rocha doesn't come even when they told sp. For example, yesterday, (the ICS Manager) told them that they would pick them up from Murugu on their way to Kpulumbo for the Internal Inspection training, but they didn't.

FS said that the VCC told him they didn't pick them up because they were already late.

VCC wrote in her report that Murugu CISs did not come because they were waiting to be picked up, even if that was not communicated to them.

Interviews with Gurubagu CIS

CIS nr. 1

Duration: 21:48 mins

(Teacher in the community)

A: My research is about communication. By communication, I mean the human interactions where you change information. I want to follow the chain of communication from the top of A Rocha, the two partners A Rocha and Agro Eco, to the field officers, (the ICS Managers), then to the CIS, you, and then to the farmers. I try to identify two things, first the positive things in the communication which has made the work more efficient and helped and the problems and challenges which we should improve.

A: So, the first question is, describe one useful or good engagement with A Rocha or the farmers which allowed you to be more efficient and successful at your work as a CIS.

CIS: Can you repeat it again?

A: So, I hope you tell me practical things about what has happened, and that's why I am asking you to describe one useful or good engagement with A Rocha or with the farmers which have helped you to be more efficient in your work as a CIS.

CIS: Okay, very good. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity; I am very grateful. A Rocha, first of all, when they were bringing us this project they had to come and meet those, I (the CIS) here and my colleagues and inform us about how they are going to bring program cassava, organic cassava planting. I said, ou, this is good, it will help my community as well as the women who are in pure poverty, and we have to also champion that works to be successful.

CIS: First thing they did was to meet the whole community and then inform the whole community about how they are bringing the project about organic farming, how the farm will help us the people of this community Gurubago, and if we take it very seriously, I think some of our problems at least will be able to solve.

CIS: After that, they went back, and they came again; they had to come and meet and tell us the things that we are supposed to do and the things that we are supposed to do during organic farming.

CIS: First, let me elaborate on the things that we are supposed to do, and then I will come to the things that we are not supposed to do. First, we have to make sure that we get land. A land that is good for organic cassava planting, so that you get a land and clear the land and after clearing the land you start planting. But in clearing the land, you should look for land that has not been used chemicals for three years; you can farm on that land. When you farm on that land, there should be no burning. You should not burn the trees; you should leave trees, not all the trees—no burning on the farm. No chemical should be on the farm. We should make sure that all these things are being practiced before they will call you an organic farmer. When these things are not there, that means you are not an organic farmer. When you go to the farm, the rubbers that you send to the farm have to be buried, or you look for a place to dump them; they should not displace them on the farm.

CIS: That is what we were thought as a CIS. And they even tell us how to plant, when you clear the land, no chemical, no burning, and you make sure that you get a place where erosion is not there. Even where the land has erosion, it should know how to farm so that waterways, so that the water can pass without any blockings and will destroy your farm. This is all that we were champion, and we were all, they told us how to do this, and you will be a good organic farmer. I was talking of the planting; the planting is one meter by one meter so that you plant. After you plant, make sure that when you weed, you should not use chemicals in

weeding. You should use manpower and weed inside this thing. And they also taught us about crop rotation. We should not plant only the cassava; you can put cowpea, beans, Bambara beans, okra, maize, whatever that you want to grow so that you can be crop mixing on the farm. But the only thing is that we should encourage the legumes cause when you plant a legume on the farm it means that this grass that grows and disturbs, the weeds that disturb your cassava it will suppress them so that they cannot grow again when you grow this thing, the legumes, plants on your cassava plants. This is what we were thought we should do.

CIS: And CIS, you have to go around and be checking the farm every month at least you should go two times or three times. And make sure if there is a disease in the cassava so that you will ask them so they can use the neem tree leaves to spray on the disease or they can decide to remove that cassava sticks that have a disease. You remove it and replace it with a new one. That is what we were thought.

CIS: And again, when we come to the harvesting of the cassava, we want to harvest cassava, you must make sure that you get a place where you dry it, a clean place where the cassava will not be contaminated to continue all these jobs, all this work but in the harvesting time, if you are not careful all your cassava can be contaminated. So, they will be giving us a drying matt you can spread on your farm so that you harvest your cassava and put them on the matt and if one week or two weeks your cassava is dry make sure that you pick them up and come home take care that you place them where the cassava will not be contaminated. You avoid sending the plastic, rubbers, and everything on top of the things. When you do this, this is what A Rocha told, teach our farmers so that they are able to work.

CIS: In a place, a land where there is not enough green, we encourage them to plant more trees on their cassava farm if there are no trees there. We encourage them to plant cashew and other trees you can plant. So that this then you can. And on the land after you harvest on that area you can do, I was telling that rotation, you can do sifting cultivation. You can sift your cassava to a different plot, another plot, and you will then grow groundnuts or maize or whatever that you want; you can grow it there. Then after you grow it, then you can grow too the other side so that it will be rotating so that you will not be using the land; you will not be. To me, I would say you will not be misusing your land. So, you use the land properly so that you be able to get whatever that you want to get.

(interruption)

CIS: So, this is what A Rocha has taught us, and this is what we have learned. Through A Rocha, we have actually learned a lot, my dear sister. We have learned a lot from A Rocha. I think we have to appreciate the work of A Rocha in our community Gurubago; we appreciate it; they have helped us a lot, God bless them.

A: I see you have at least received a lot of information, and you have learned also. At least there has been some good communication.

CIS: Yes

A: Okay, let's move to the challenges. Or let's first, do you want to mention something positive about the communication with the farmers?

CIS: Yes, so our communication with the farmers, we make sure that in a month, every month we have to even if you couldn't meet twice then we have to ones in a meeting, and we will train them because we are those who train the farmers. A Rocha also trained us on how to train the farmers. We have been sensitized in this organic training very well, so we have

much information much knowledge about this organic, and we will then transfer what we have learned to the farmers. In a month we meet once.

A: Every month, you meet once?

CIS: We meet! We meet the women, and we tell them this is what, remember, no chemicals in your land, no burning, no cutting down of trees, all these things what I have just expanded. This is also what I tell.

A: So, the farmers will come?

CIS: they will come. You see this one community; let's take an example. Sometimes you don't even need to call for the people when you just see you; they are coming, they want to come and listen and have much information about the organic cassava.

A: Okay, so let's move to the challenges, so it is the same question almost.

A: I want you to describe an engagement or lack of it that has caused you a challenge, problem, or obstacle to doing your work as CIS.

CIS: In fact, the challenges are many. Let me tell you. As this work we are doing, we are still supposed to encourage, they are supposed to encourage us very much so that we are able to do this work. They are encouraging us; I will not say they are not doing anything but need much encouragement. Like financially, allowances that we are taking, up to me I have seen it's not enough. Even to me, it is a challenge. Because you have to buy fuel, as it is we don't have motorbikes, sometimes you have to rely on other people to beg their motorbike to go and check on farms. You can even beg for someone's motorbike, and you go and fall on the road. Then you have to come and repair it. It is a challenge.

CIS: Another challenge that I am seeing is that if we harvest, we have been given a motor king but how the people are many, is one motor king able to send that many at the same time. Because three might be three or than people who want to pick the cassava at the same time. I think the one motor king won't be able to do that work. ‘

CIS: In addition, another challenge that I have seen is the main challenge, you were here, and one man just came attacking you that you didn't give anything. I wish they would have given at least a soap or something so that we meet once a month, and those people who come to the meeting take this, and you go and wash your hands. To me, I think this would be something which would encourage many farmers. You have seen it, you gave something, and someone didn't get it, so he is coming to attack you; why didn't I get it. Sometimes they need much such that when you harvest, you will have your cassava and get money. You can even buy more soap than this. But if you don't know.

CIS: Another challenge that I have seen, the farmers, sometimes you beg them to plant early, but they can't plant early simply because there is not enough money, especially the lady, the women. They rely on men to weed, to clear their land before they're able to. So sometimes these people, some of them will even take the money, and they are delaying before they go. And sometimes you won't even have the money to give them.

A: Wanted to ask to kind of bring it more to the communication aspect. For example, when you have such a challenge, the farmers tell it to you, so you know about it. Do you tell it to A Rocha, and if yes, how does A Rocha react to it?

CIS: Yes. Actually, when they have a problem, and they communicate to us, we also report it to A Rocha. Actually, A Rocha they are doing well. Sometimes they will let someone come and hear on before. If it is about training on that issue, they will come and retrain the women and us about how the thing should be done and how to do it properly.

A: For example, now, let's take the financial issue, so if you take me out of the picture because I have been now also working with you, but I should not be part of my research, so don't think about me, just the other people, (ICS Managers) maybe even (the FS). How have they been reacting, or what kind of reaction has it brought on them when you tell them that you have these financial problems.

CIS: yes. Sometimes like how I was telling you, if the women come to you and it's a financial issue, sometimes they delay, sometimes it doesn't happen. As a human, you cannot be working, and there will not be any challenges.

A: No, and the purpose of this is not to blame anybody; it is to see where the challenges are and what we can do about them. Feel free to tell me whatever the challenges are.

CIS: Okay, so sometimes you will tell them, but they will not react quickly,

A: okay. So how would you hope that they would react?

CIS: I hope that as much as we tell them a problem, they should react as much as possible if it's within a week.

A: So, you hope they would react faster.

CIS: Yes, faster.

A: Is there more challenges?

CIS: For the communication, I think for the CIS, the network is a problem. The network is actually a problem for the communication to A Rocha. I think if we get any organization to help with network issues, that would have been good. A Rocha might want to communicate something to us, but the line is not going. And sometimes we, too, might be trying to get a network and call them for an issue, but there is a network problem.

A: So, if anything else doesn't come to your mind?

CIS: I think, what will come to my mind, the CIS to me, A Rocha, the CIS should be given a certificate.

A: That's a good point; tell me more about that.

CIS: We should be given a certificate so that the work that we are doing, Ghana now we need, been in the place it will help you in your CV in case you are asked to come, if someone an organization or NGO needs you when you have it, I think it will help you to get such a job. I think having a certificate will be beneficial for us very much here. I also encourage them that we should be able to get the motorbikes for CIS so that they will be able to do their work very fast. So, if there is an issue, I can just take the motorbike to the nearby community and get a network. If there is no motorbike here, you can. At least they are giving us something small to be able to buy some, but what I have seen is that it is too small, 100 cedis per month, when you want to buy petrol in a month. So, we can plant more organic cassava and get more. Thank you very much.

A: thank you.

CIS nr. 2

A: Okay, so the same questions as in the focus group discussion.

A: At first, I want you to describe positive experiences with communication. Describe me one useful or good engagement with A Rocha or with the farmers which allowed you to be more efficient in your work as a CIS.

CIS: The positive?

A: Positive things first.

CIS: A Rocha trained us in organic cassava farming. How to supervise and how to determine whether this place has been sprayed or not. And the cassava harvesting too. We those who are living here can also use it or buy it from the farmers and use it as food. That's one. Two, the way we volunteer, and we are helping A Rocha to get the quality cassava or maybe the organic cassava from the farmers will also add up to our great performance too. Let me say that we are also honest and truthful to work, and it will add something to our, let me say, our dignity getting to some future works with A Rocha. Maybe if, in the end, they get the organic cassava, they will also think that we are truthful and honest to the work. And we have been exposed to different people like you, and (the FS), and the best time we get to know because of A Rocha and the organic cassava we got to live with you.

A: Okay. Do you maybe have something to say about the engagement with the farmers?

CIS: The farmers, too most of them benefit more from the shea nut, but this year there is no yield in the shea nut side, so the cassava also helps in their income and contributes to their push-ups (?).

A: Okay. So then challenges in communication. Describe difficulty or obstacle in communication with A Rocha or with the farmers.

A: Sometimes you go to inspect somebody, but the person will not be ready, but you still be begging the person to have time for you. Sometimes they will speak anyway or lie to you, but you have to be patient. It's also part of the work. And sometimes A Rocha too approaching them on the farm is somehow difficult. Sometimes it is difficult to approach them on the farms, so you need to struggle whether find your own means or beg someone to borrow it. Some of the farms are very far. Sometimes it will be raining and flood on the rivers. Sometimes you have to go back and then the next day goes supervising.

A: So, it is sometimes difficult to actually even to get to talk with them?

CIS: yea, at the farms.

A: because of the physical obstacles?

CIS: yes.

A: Any more challenges? So, the reason why I am asking this is not to blame anybody but to figure out where there are challenges so we can try to solve them.

CIS: Yea, even the cassava sticks, there is a lot of challenges there. I remember last when (the FS) came, and we went to one guy's farm to beg for the sticks; in the end, we were blamed that we the CIS we had the sticks and wanted to sell them to get money.

A: So, there was a misunderstanding?

CIS: yes. So, in the end, we had to sit and talk to them before we could understand them.

A: So, it was solved, they did understand?

CIS: Yes.

A: Anymore, I like this kind of example, do you have more?

CIS: The most important thing from the farmers is the woman how to get labor and be able to rise the mounts. They can clear the land but how to raise the mounts. Sometimes they will hire labor, and the people will take the money and refuse to go.

A: take the money and refuse to go?

CIS: So that's why you see, the time will be late for the planting.

A: And what will you do in that kind of situation?

CIS: Because they are all in the same community, if not the farmers who are able to talk to such person, you, the CIS, get involved in such matters.

A: Have you done that? Did you have to solve that kind of problem?

CIS: Yes, one woman gave the money to some guys to go and raise the mounts for her, but they took the money and refused to go. So, (CIS nr. 3) and I went and sat the guy down and talked to him about the losses in their farms and how they gained more planting the cassava, so the guy, maybe within two days, the guy went there, and we came to finish the work together.

A: Okay, can you think of anything else?

CIS: I can think of. Then the last meeting at Wawato we had there, I was the one who rode my bike to that place, and in the end, we didn't get anything either to buy the fuel or to replace the fuel we used to go to Wawato.

A: Okay, so in this situation, you felt like they should have given you fuel money?

CIS: Yea, that was how they used to do. Anytime when we move from here to Wawato, those who attend, the CIS, who attend the meeting, they will give them, and we will a bit more than Wawato because we have used fuel from here to that place.

A: Okay, so that's how they did before, but this time you didn't get the money.

CIS: Yea, that was the first day; we never got something like that. We thought that we could get it because from here to Wawato is like ten cedis fuel. We even thought that to all of us they should give the bikes to use.

A: Did you tell (the ICS Manager)?

CIS: We didn't tell.

A: Why didn't you tell?

CIS: We didn't understand the reason why they did not, why such things happen.

A: But if you don't understand, why don't you ask?

CIS: That was the day we were going, so we were waiting for the next meeting we attended; we could have approached you.

A: Anything else you can think of?

CIS: Concerning the farmers? Sometimes the farmers, after planting or weeding, they don't always come to report to us that they have done this. They will come later and say we planted on Monday, but they don't know the exact Monday or the specific date they planted. So, you have to trace and do some checks to find out the particular date. So, they should have told us early. Like if you planted today, you would come and tell us or tomorrow so that we can get the date fast. But if you wait for two weeks before coming to us, it will be difficult for some of us to get the exact date they planted. Whether the planting or the weeding, sometimes they come to tell us late, they don't come earlier.

A: Still, something you want to mention? Any time you are out of things, we'll finish.

CIS: That's it, it's okay.

A: Then thank you.

CIS nr. 3

A: My research is about communication. By communication, I mean the human interactions where you transfer information. So, it's basically about the cassava project, and I hope to hear really practical examples of what happened, detailed information where I get a deep understanding. I have two questions. So, the first one is about positive experiences with communication, and I want you to tell examples about with A Rocha and communication with the farmers, or it can also be communicated with the other CIS.

A: So the first question is, I want you to describe useful or good engagements with A Rocha or with the farmers which have helped you to more efficient or successful at your work as a CIS.

CIS: Okay, as a CIS, you have to send the right information to A Rocha. As a CIS, you have to visit all farmers and see and keep records for A Rocha.

A: So, this is your good experience of what has worked?

CIS: And as a CIS, you need to call for meetings in case you have any information's from A Rocha and bring it to the farmers.

A: So, this process where you get information from A Rocha, and you transfer it to the farmers you feel it has been working well?

CIS: Yes

A: It has been effective?

CIS: yes

A: And it has made your work as a CIS effective?

CIS: yes.

CIS: Okay, then let's talk about the second question about the challenges in communication, so with A Rocha or with the farmers.

A: So, in this, I want you to describe an engagement or lack of it that has made your work as a CIS less effective or successful.

CIS: Through the information for A Rocha to the farmers, some of the farmers are taking it seriously, but the challenge is that some of them like the women they are suffering from the farming. They don't weed themselves; they take labor. Sometimes it is very difficult for them to get the labor for weeding. So that's one challenge.

A: So, for the communication aspect of it, the women were told to you, have you told it to A Rocha?

CIS: Yes

A: And how has A Rocha reacted?

CIS: It's just today that we were informed.

A: So today is the first day you told A Rocha, meaning (the FS) and me?

CIS: Yes

A: Before you have not informed A Rocha?

CIS: No

A: did you know about this before? That the women have this challenge.

CIS: Yes, we knew.

A: How long have you known?

CIS: Just last year.

A: Since last year?

CIS: Yes

A: And when you have a challenge like this, how do you decide if you tell it to A Rocha or not?

CIS: I decide if I can tell A Rocha and A Rocha can support.

A: Okay, So, for example, in this situation, why did you not inform A Rocha earlier?

CIS: Because I did not inform my colleagues earlier.

A: Okay, so you did not discuss it among yourself?

CIS: yea, that's why we haven't told it to A Rocha.

A: Okay, so you always decide together if you inform A Rocha?

CIS: yes

A: More challenges with the communication?

CIS: Yes, we have the cassava sticks for planting; we have a challenge for that. Like some of the farmers are complaining they don't get the sticks for planting even if you go one of the farmers today, he said it that even if we can get someone who was there for him.

A: And how did you get to know this?

CIS: We went to the farm.

A: the first time, how did you get to know this and when?

CIS: That was the last two weeks, the day when Mr. (FS) came here for the cassava sticks; that was the day that our community people started complaining about that.

A: Okay, so two weeks ago, they also informed you

CIS: yes.

A: And what did you do as a CIS? Or the three of you.

CIS: The three of us, I don't know if my colleagues are also aware of that; I haven't discussed it with any of them.

A: You didn't discuss it yet.

CIS: No.

Interviews with Bawena CIS

CIS nr. 1

Duration: 21mins

Location: Bawena

Date: 02.7.2021

A: My research is about communication. So, I am trying to find out what has been good about it and what we can improve. I am going to give recommendations to A Rocha, and, hopefully, I will meet with and talk about it with you as well. So, by communication, I mean interactions where we exchange information. And I want you to concentrate on the organic cassava project and your work as a CIS. I hope that you can come up with very practical things which have happened and explain them as much in detail as possible so I can get a deep understanding.

A: So, **my first question is I want you to describe one useful or not just one, as many as you want, describe useful or good engagements with A Rocha or with the farmers or with the other CIS which has helped you to be more effective or successful at your work. So positive things have helped you to be more successful as a CIS.**

CIS: As a CIS, A Rocha came together and brought organic farming. So, as CIS, we see that it is very interesting. Even in the community, it is very interesting to some of the farmers' members of the organic farmers. Why am I saying this? Other farmers don't do that; cassava has some important value for them. They only think that they will farm for consumption even though there is an extra way you can do to help you to farm other crops. So as CIS we have, we also come and train our farmers; you can do organic farming. Others will also make their other crops to be organic. So, per the organic farming, we taught them that if you are doing organic your health too is what, it will last longer than if you eat what...

A: The people are talking here, so we have to go somewhere else. Sorry, now you can continue.

CIS: So, when we do organic cassava, also all the other crops we want organic, so for them using the chemicals the chemical self is not even for us. Now look at the chemicals; they are even costly. Now, if you use chemicals now, and you don't have money, and you can't farm again, and poverty too will come again. So, if you are used to the organic way, you know that this maximum of acres or this maximum of I can farm. So, you will not farm higher than what you can practice. So, we have been trained to what, teaching them the landscape to make a good land, to do what, safe for us. And then the organism in the soil will also last longer, and the soil will last longer for us to be using the soil small small, rather than using the chemicals. If you are using the chemicals, it will kill them. So, you farm a number of acres, and at the end of the harvest, you will not get anything from it. And even if you farm small and it is organic, and you continue that way maybe getting to some few years there is, if after the harvest you can get some out of it. And the organism self, no, killing the trees and the other things, when, they have been saying it that when the trees die, then the humans will also die. So even if we are doing the organic way, maybe the killing of the trees will also reduce. It will mean that the environment is safe for us. So, the cassava issue is also very nice and interesting.

CIS: And what is bordering the CIS is because of the cattle and getting the cassava sticks to help our farmers.

A: **So now we are going to the challenges.**

CIS: Yea, so they too are complaining a lot. So, because of that, most of them want to enter into organic farming, but because of this, most of them can't get planting sticks to plant. So, if we are complaining to the office, maybe if you can get help for us, our farmers too will get the cassava sticks. That would maybe help them a lot.

A: Was this problem here already last year?

CIS: Last year the problem is affecting this year.

A: Okay, you see that the problems

CIS: It will keep repeating. If something, getting to some few years' cassavas will not, because if you don't have the planting sticks, how can you plant.

A: So, you told this problem to A Rocha already last year?

CIS: Yes.

A: How did they react?

CIS: We told that, but we didn't get any reaction...

A: Nothing happened?

A: They did not react?

CIS: They did not react.

A: Did they tell you something?

CIS: They didn't say anything?

A: They didn't tell you anything; they didn't do anything?

CIS: Hmm. Because the cattle were disturbing us, they didn't say anything.

A: About the cattle?

CIS: Hmm.

A: What did they do about the planting sticks?

CIS: The planting sticks, last year some people, they do organic, they help together so that they get small small. But this year, the cattle came more and destroyed everything. Last year the cattle didn't come like this year.

A: So, when you have a problem like this, how do you deal with it? What do you do?

CIS: Sometimes, those problems are coming from the chiefs. Because our community chief is like this, we don't have any power to say unless someone is overhearing him. So, he normally takes the cattle and sends them. You know the land is not ours; it is for the Daboya people. So, they send them down here. Even if they do, they have a problem with him; they are supporting them. Even the ones whose (cassava got) destroyed will not get anything. Because of that, most people know that this year if I do something and I will harvest my things fast, I don't have any problem with the cattle. That is the reason why most of them enter into those businesses farming more than cassava. They know that the cattle, in the rainy season, go to the other side, and in the rainy season, groundnuts will be okay. When the groundnut is okay, they harvest. But the cassava will be there for one and a half years. So, during the dry season, they will come, and they destroy the cassava sticks.

A: I see. So right now, you were saying that you don't have power, so did you do anything, or because you feel that you don't have the power, you also did not do anything.

CIS: Even if you go, what can you do? We have nothing to do.

A: So, you won't try because you feel that it won't help?

CIS: Even if you try, what, you will not see any good impact of it. Last year one man, when he went and the cattle were disturbing his cassava, so he has been telling them that they shouldn't come there, even if they are coming, they should go by, they shouldn't enter the

farm. So, he picked the cassava and put them down. When he put them down, the cattle came inside, and he was annoyed, so he shot the cattle down. He just fell in the cassava and the cassava inside the mouth. So, he came and reported. He paid 2000 GHC for shooting the cattle down there. His cassava is also there; he has not picked it. So, they are concentrated on the Fulani more than this.

A: So now, when we are already in the challenges, I ask the second question. So, the second question is that you would describe an engagement with A Rocha, the farmers, or other CIS, or lack of engagement that has made your work less efficient or successful as a CIS.

CIS: Okay, as a CIS, nothing that you can do with those challenges. We, too, are facing problems.

A: So, what are your problems with your work?

CIS: In our work, the problems, sometimes they will not communicate to us early before they report. But then maybe if I have the travel I set, anything you want to do unless you want to plan, if I plan that tomorrow I go to this place, and today a report came for that my plan is destroyed, or that they are coming will be destroyed because the information wouldn't get to me early. And if it did not get to me early, you can't prepare for it. And your father can't send you, or you refuse your father and follow your own ways. So, our challenge is that even if they want to come, they should communicate to us early, so we know that they are coming. And mostly our problems, we the CIS and the farmers too, you know Fridays are our resting days, so if they should come, they should come on Fridays.

A: They should be coming on Fridays?

CIS: On Fridays, that is our resting hour. But the other days, even if we are going to search for our farmers, we will not get them. Even the reporting, even if they say that tomorrow they are coming and tomorrow like this is not Friday, you can go maybe the follow up we planned, maybe early in the morning they will wake up and go to, so if I want to get somebody, I will not get it.

A: So, if you want to meet the farmers in the community, it should be Friday?

CIS: It should be Friday. But the other days they are at the farms.

A: And you hope that you would be informed earlier so you can plan for yourself?

CIS: Ummm. So that's all.

A: Okay. More things do you have?

CIS: And more things too! Even the meetings we have been calling going to Murugu or other places like this, you know the bike, the motorbike they brought, is too small for three CIS. So even what is on it, it is worrying us. If they want to hold a meeting, either they should come down like this, even when they are coming with their car, they should come and pick up the other CIS and come to us. After that, when they are going, they should distribute them again. But for us, three, sending us like this, the motorbike, the road, three people it is too small. So that is one challenge apart from the cattle.

A: Have you told this to A Rocha?

CIS: We have informed them.

A: And what did A Rocha say?

CIS: We haven't.

A: You haven't informed them? Okay, so this is the first time you are telling. Why haven't you told A Rocha?

CIS: We were planning to tell them.

A: So why have you waited so long?

CIS: (laughing)

A: Or there is no reason?

CIS: We are to sit together; that is my perception, so unless we held a meeting together and see.

A: With A Rocha people?

CIS: Hmm.

A: So, you haven't had the possibility yet?

CIS: We haven't.

A: Haven't? Did you ask them that there is something you want to tell?

CIS: No, we haven't.

A: You haven't.

CIS: So how would you think that how what should happen that you could communicate these things efficiently to A Rocha?

CIS: It would be the next time they call us for meetings.

A: So, it is a new problem, that is why you haven't talked about it?

CIS: Hmm. But that is my perception; I don't know-how is the other CIS perception.

A: I know, I am interviewing you, not them. Okay, more challenges?

CIS: More challenges. The challenges, sometimes we don't know whether we have been paid or we have not been paid. Because they say 100 cedis for fuel allowance and other things, either it is fuel allowance or payment. Because now it is, we are to help each other, and we don't know whether A Rocha is to help us in the payment, the 100 cedis is our payment or the fuel, we don't know.

A: Okay, so you would prefer it is two separate (payments of) money for you and for the fuel?

CIS: Hmm. I don't know whether it is the payment, or it is for the fuel allowance. And now we are confused. Because of that, even when they send the 300 to us, you know the motorbike they are complaining that there is a lack of fuel. When you have your own problem, you use the money and go and serve it. So, we don't know whether the money is for our fuel allowance, or it is for the payment.

A: So, you also don't know how much fuel to put into the motorbike?

CIS: Hmm. So that is the problem.

A: Okay, I understand. Have you communicated about this to A Rocha?

CIS: We haven't.

A: You haven't. Is this also a new thing?

CIS: Hmm.

A: Are there more things, more challenges?

CIS: Most of the farmers too are telling their problem to us. Sometimes they don't understand the work or something like that. Sometimes they say if you want to do it, they want them all organic; then A Rocha too should be helping them. Because of that, sometimes they want to help the farmers. Even when someone you shouldn't complain. You should help yourself before they help. You know, a village like this, sometimes they have some wrong perception they don't understand. They say that even when they don't do it organically, someone will come and buy. So, we are trying other means to convince them.

A: Okay, so they feel that they already have a cassava market, so it doesn't matter if it is organic or not.

CIS: Hmm. So that's their perception. So, we are trying to convince them, saying that maybe in the end of it those who are part of it, maybe, in the end, they too will get something. Because of it, some people are now looking at the possibilities to join, but they will say that they lack cassava sticks.

A: Are there more challenges you want to mention?

CIS: These are the challenges which are.

A: This is now your chance to tell me, whatever comes to your mind about the communication, so I can tell A Rocha.

CIS: Our communication too, sometimes we are facing some challenges a lot. The call, SMS, sometimes we need to hear about you, how healthy you are or something like that. So even if you are there, have you seen calling you because of a lack of network. Here we are facing a lot of challenges, no money for us. So even at the end of the week or something like this you (can't understand)

A: Because you don't have money to buy credit?

CIS: aha, and the CIS too, when we go to work, we need to have a shirt. So, if the farmers see you wearing this shirt, they will know this day they are, even if I am wearing the shirt and I am going, they know that I am going for work. Maybe the farmer will not go; maybe the farmer will wait. Or the farmer will ask me why you are wearing this shirt today. So, if they are (?) to it seeing me wearing it on particular days for the work, they will ask are you having the work today too

CIS nr. 2

Date 2.7.2021

Duration: 6:41

A: So, my research is about communication. The purpose is to see which things have been successful, where the communication has been successful and where there have been challenges or problems where we should improve. I have two questions. So, I want you to look at the organic cassava project, especially your role as a CIS and your work as a CIS. The first question is that I want you to describe me a useful or good engagement with A Rocha, the other CIS, or with the farmers, which has helped your work, which has made your work as CIS more effective more successful. Do you understand?

CIS: So, you meant that I should tell the challenges we the CIS are facing?

A: Not yet, but now I want you to tell me good or useful things which have helped you.

CIS: Things will help?

A: Things which have helped.

CIS: Things you have helped with?

A: Not me personally, A Rocha, and the farmers. Engagement with them has helped you to do your work.

CIS: So, things that we need A Rocha to do for us to do our work?

A: No, things which have already happened which have helped you.

CIS: Yes, A Rocha has helped us with a motorbike, which we normally use to visit to do inspection with our farmers. So, we use that bike to work around all our farmers' farms to see how they are doing on their farms. Whether they are doing what we expected, or they are doing what we are against.

A: Are there more useful things A Rocha has helped you with?

CIS: Yes. Currently, A Rocha helped us with a warehouse where when we harvest our cassava; we normally put them at the warehouse before we can sell them wherever they are going. And A Rocha helped us with the grinding mill, which we will use to mill our cassava before they are able to then send them to.

A: Okay, these are very, like physical examples of things they have given to you. Can you maybe think more in the communication sense like not physical things they have given to you, but the actual things they have come to help you here? Do you understand me?

CIS: Yes.

A: Can you tell me something like that?

CIS: Mostly, we were farming using chemicals on our farms, and not A Rocha trained us how to use, how to do organic farming so that we improve our farming and to get healthy through practicing organic farming.

A: Has this helped you?

CIS: Train how to do organic farming by not burning or burning trees on the field. They trained us how to use organic spray by using neem trees to spray on our farms to kill insects in our farms.

A: So, this training has helped you to do your work as a CIS?

CIS: Yes.

A: Okay. More good things? Can you think of more positive things? Or that's all?

CIS: Yes.

A: Okay, then let's go to the challenges. So, challenges in communication. So again, I want you to **describe an engagement with A Rocha, with other CIS or farmers, or lack of engagement which has not happened, communication has not happened, which has made your work less effective or less successful.** Do you understand the question?

CIS: Yes. Currently, the CIS we have one motorbike; our CIS is three. When we are to visit the farms, the bike is not enough for us while we are three.

A: Okay, more challenges. Or okay, let's do it this way. Have you informed A Rocha about your challenge?

CIS: Not yet.

A: Is it because it is a new challenge, or is there another reason why you haven't informed them?

CIS: Because the work is still beginning. Every beginning problem is still challenging to us; when the program goes at the end, we are able to get the bikes too for us to do easy work with the organic farming.

A: Okay, so you want to wait the project is successful before

CIS: Before we can ask.

A: More challenges?

CIS: No.

A: This is the only challenge you have? Otherwise, is everything easy?

CIS: Yes.

A: Really?

CIS: But when we have the bike, we can do the work easier and faster.

A: There is no other challenge?

CIS: Yes.

A: Are you very sure about that?

CIS: To me.

A: Okay, if you say so, that is fine. Okay, if you don't have anything else to say, that's it.

CIS: No.

A: This is your chance to express your challenges; if you don't tell me, I can't help you.

CIS: That is my challenge concerning the work.

A: Okay, then thank you,

CIS: You're welcome.

Interviews with Kpulumbo CISs

CIS 1

A: So, my research is about communication, and I am looking at the organic cassava project. And I want you to think about your role as a CIS your work as a CIS. So, by communication, I mean the human interactions where we exchange information. And I am looking at communication with you like I basically want to follow the chain of communication from A Rocha, from Agro Eco to you the CIS and then to the farmers, and the other way around. And I want to see what has gone well and where do we have challenges. And I want you to give practical examples so that I can get detailed information. So, I have two questions. The first one is about the good things in communication. So, I want you to **describe an engagement, a useful or good engagement with A Rocha, with the other CIS, with the farmers, which has helped you to do your work as CIS, for you to be successful in your work a CIS.**

CIS: As a CIS in the community, it's good every month CIS should move around all the farms to check whether they are doing the right thing on their farms. As part of that, A Rocha has helped our CIS even every month; they used to give us the soap money to motivate ourselves as a CIS.

CIS: And normally, most of the farmers know our roles and regulations. So, we, the CIS, too, are playing our roles as much as we can do to help our community to develop.

CIS: And the more to the point, we the CIS, A Rocha too has provided a motorbike to move around all the farms every two-three week. And we are proud of what A Rocha has done for us. Even in the community, we didn't have a motor, but right now, we have a brand-new motorbike.

CIS: So, most of the farmers who are not interested, we use to motivate them or to talk to them about organic farming in our community. And most of them, those who are doing the chemicals, know the chemicals are not helping us at all. But through the organic, everybody knows that it's good to do organic farming and forget about the chemical used to clear the land or to chemical to weed around the farm. And we are proud of it. And we still do more than what we are doing today. In the future, we want rather by two-three years, all the community to forget about chemical use because of organic farming. So, we are proud of that, thank you very much.

A: Okay, so these are the useful things which have helped you, information which has been provided to you or the motorbike which has been provided to you, this is what has helped you.

CIS: Yea. And let's say the previous year, you can peel your cassava and more than two years, no one will come and buy, but right now, people are now searching for cassava because or A Rocha, they are buying our cassava every year so that one too is helping us. So, when you sell your cassava, you can definitely use it to pay your hospital bill, your school fees, and other things. With a lot of help, A Rocha has helped our community. So, we thank them a lot. We cannot even mention the help that they have been helping in the community. So, we are proud of what they are doing. So even human beings, when they gave you something, you can't say like, you have given me the motorbike, don't give me a car, you are praying that getting to sometimes they are giving you just the motorbike. Even we, the CIS, will not stop the work; we will continue and continue until the kingdom comes.

A: Okay, is there still something you want to mention, or should I go to the next question?

CIS: let's go to the next question.

A: So, the next question is almost the same, but about the challenges in the communication. So again, thinking about your work as a CIS, thinking about A Rocha, other CIS, and the farmers. **To describe me an engagement with A Rocha, other CIS or the farmers, or lack of engagement which has made your work as a CIS less saucerful, less efficient.**

CIS: Yeah, for that matter, as you as the internal inspector, through your education, we too would not stop. When you educate, we, the CIS, will move around, or we used to call a meeting to educate the farmers about the organic process. So, all the farmers know they do and don't in the community. What is right and what is not right for them, all the farmers are aware of the do and don't.

A: So, where is there a challenge?

CIS: Ah, okay. Our challenge is now if it is getting to the dry season, normally the Fulani herdsman is disturbing even us. Because I can say me CIS, for instance, last year's cassava is

still on my farm. I couldn't finish all the last years because of the Fulani herdsman. I decided to divide it into two, while right now, it pains me because of the Fulani herdsman. Because my colleagues are enjoying the cassava money, I couldn't get a chance to harvest it all because of the Fulani herdsman. It is a challenge for us.

A: So, does A Rocha know about this challenge?

CIS: Currently yea, they are aware of the challenge. Because manager himself (NS's Project Manager), I have spoken to him about the challenge.

A: You spoke to him. And how do they react?

CIS: They are saying that when it is getting to dry time, they will let us talk to the chief in the community so that they talk to the Fulani herdsman about the challenge with the cattle. So that is our challenge.

A: Okay, then more challenges? Also, when you think about when you are communicating with the farmers, are there challenges?

CIS: No, for the farmers, at the beginning when we talked to the farmers, but right now they all know the process about organic, so we don't have challenges.

A: So maybe you can tell what kind of challenges you had in the beginning? And how were you able to solve it?

CIS: Okay, in the beginning, most of them did not know the difference between organic and conventional, but right now, they know the organic and conventional. So that is our challenge.

A: So, how did you solve it?

CIS: Right now, through education, we were able to solve the challenges. Because assuming that you don't know something, you are able to teach me something by doing this. Do this; in the end, definitely be at the right point. So, we were able to teach the farmer the right thing, so all the farmers in my community know the organic more than the conventional. Even though the conventional is our major right now, most of them farmers know that the conventional one is no good for our health. So right now, they are aware.

A: So maybe the transition to the organic, what were the most difficult things for the farmers to understand? Or to change?

CIS: At the beginning, okay. More to the point, according to your point, let's say the conventional one, maybe somebody says that he or she wants to buy the organic one, the person doesn't need the conventional one. If you have the conventional one, they will not buy it. A Rocha will not buy the conventional one unless the organic one. So that is why most of the farmers forget about the conventional one and focus on the organic one.

A: But in the organic practices, which one was challenging for the farmers to change? For the farmers to become organic, they have to change a lot of farming practices, for example, the chemicals, but there are also other things they had to change. Which ones were difficult for the farmers?

CIS: ooh, that one, the difficult ones are most of them are still, those who don't know, but right now previous once, they are using the chemicals to clear the weed after clearing the land when the weeds are coming again, they will use the chemical to clear the land again. But right now, they know that you can use your manual, or you can do it manually. Or at the same time, you can weed it when it is; when the grass is coming up, you can weed again. It means there will not be a problem for you to control your weeding site.

A: So right not there is no problem?

CIS: no, no, there is no problem at all.

A: Then, maybe if you think about the challenges with communication with A Rocha. Are there any challenges?

CIS: Okay, here our challenge is we don't have a network. If you want to talk to A Rocha, if they are not in the community and you want to talk to them, unless you take a long, you take two three hours before you can be able to make a call, so the network is our challenge.

A: Is there more challenges?

CIS: There is no challenge apart from.

A: No other challenge? What about because I know you are working on other projects with A Rocha, you are working in the cassava, but you are also working in the tree planting.

CIS: Yea, but that one is our job, so there is no challenge on that.

A: So, it fits well together, and there is no problem?

CIS: Yea, yea.

A: No meetings at the same time?

CIS: Okay, that one is another challenge.

A: Maybe some other challenges?

CIS: No, no.

A: Not at all? Only meetings at the same time are a challenge?

CIS: It is a challenge.

A: Because I mean, if you can tell me now, it is not to blame anybody, it's not to criticize anybody, it is just to see where we can improve. So, if you tell me now where there are challenges, then maybe I can help you.

CIS: If we have a meeting, let's assume that this meeting is malaria (the CIS was on a break from a malaria meeting when I was interviewing him), and your own too; just this morning, they informed us that we are going to have this meeting. Last night I would have called you to inform so sometimes meetings at the same time are another challenge. But we are praying that gradually gradually. You know we are two volunteers in the community. And the other one is not there.

A: Also, you said just this morning?

CIS: Yea.

A: So, it was also very short notice? So that is maybe also a challenge. Is that also a challenge with A Rocha?

CIS: No.

A: No? Do you think they give you enough warning time? So then, does anything else come to your mind?

CIS: No.

A: Now is your chance to tell me.

CIS: Okay, another point is too, for a human being, we need your help in terms of our education side.

A: What would you like to have an education from?

CIS: Now it depends because I don't know what you used to help me. Because sometimes we have financial problems in the community. If I have financial problems, decently by the education cannot move. Especially these days.

A: So, who needs the education? Is it you as a person, or do you mean the children?

CIS: I mean me. If you cannot help me, but our children definitely were able to help them.

A: But then I would like to know what kind of topic would you like to have an education on? Because even if I wouldn't know it maybe we can find somebody who can teach you.

CIS: Okay, I can say English, mathematics, science, and social studies, the core works. That's what I have.

A: Okay. That's all.

CIS: Thank you very much.

CIS nr. 2

Duration: 15 mins

A: As you might have heard, my research is about communication. By communication, I mean the human interactions where we exchange information. Did I speak too fast?

CIS: Eeh...

A: Okay, communication, you know what communication is? By communication, I mean when we exchange information. Do you understand?

CIS: Yea.

A: Okay. I want to look at things in this organic cassava project, things that have been going well, and then things that have been challenging, things that we can make better.

CIS: You know, in this organic project, I am a CIS, so every month, I just go and inspect the farmers, those who are part of the organic. So, every month I go to check the farm when the person doesn't use chemicals; I say that these are part of my organic workers. When I went there and they use some chemicals to weed or put fertilizer, I say that this one is not organic.

A: So, this is part of the communication, but I didn't ask the question. So, I have two questions. You are on the right way, so I want you to think about your work as a CIS; I want you to think about the communication in your work as a CIS. I want you to think about the communication to the farmers, and I want you to think about the communication from A Rocha. **My first question is that I want you to describe because I want you to give practical examples, so I want you to describe an engagement.** Do you understand what engagement is?

CIS: No.

A: Engagement, like a situation where you meet with A Rocha or with the farmers, which has been useful for you, which has helped you to do your work successfully as a CIS. So, things in the communication which have helped.

CIS: The things they say that we don't do?

A: Not the things which you don't do. Kind of, how has A Rocha helped you to do your work as a CIS?

CIS: The A Rocha people say that we should do the organic one. Our farmers do believe us; they believe that organic things are good. So, they say that we don't use any chemicals to weed our land or to clear our land too for planting food. So, we test it, and we see. When you go someplace, and you put the chemicals, and you plant things there, and the place go and weed, they don't use any chemicals; they don't burn them. So, when you test that side food and the chemical side food, you see the differences. And the farmers, too, believe that they will not use chemicals again because A Rocha gave us good knowledge.

A: Okay. So, you feel that the knowledge given to you is beneficial.

CIS: Yea.

A: Is this the only thing, or can you think of another thing as well? Can you think of something more?

CIS: I think more.

A: Then tell me more.

CIS: I should tell you more. A Rocha people say that when we go weed someplace, we can leave like five trees or ten. When the trees are not there, we can plant trees in the field.

A: So, do you think it's beneficial for you?

CIS: Yea, I think it is.

A: So, can you tell me more positive things about communication?

CIS: A Rocha comes to our organic this thing, they brought that here. First, we did not have buyers or the means to go to the farm. So not they gave us motorbike and motor king, so when we farm, or the shea nuts, the motor king can go and go home. So, when you harvest your thins thing, cassava, or anything you grow at the farm, then you can go and bring them. So that one, the A Rocha people, help us. So now we are also happy and anything they say we too accept it.

A: Okay, so those are the positive things. So, let's talk about the challenges. So, what kind of challenges do you have. Or sorry, let's go back, with the positive things, can you say something about the farmers what has been positive? What has helped you in your work as a CIS in the communication with the farmers?

CIS: The thing that is helping our CIS, like what the A Rocha people call us, they train us. When we come to train the farmers, they too, the way we train them, they will follow. So now everybody knows that the chemicals are no good. Unless we do what, when we weed, we don't burn the grasses. So, when you farm on that side, you are farming in three years, you don't have to. Because the A Rocha people they help us, more things.

CIS: They help us more things because, at first, they help our mothers with the shea nuts. A Rocha people come, just know when you call us, they come right now, pay them, after that gave them the bonus. That was five years ago, you see, sometimes you peel your cassava you will not get someone to come here to buy it. But when the A Rocha people come, when you peel it in 50 or 100 bags, the A Rocha people will come and buy it, and after that, they will come and give you the bonus.

A: So then, **the challenges in communication**. So, tell me about an engagement with A Rocha, or lack of it, that you haven't had communication with A Rocha, which has made your work as CIS less successful or challenging.

CIS: The challenge is that the first thing is that because right now when you peel your cassava, someday and you didn't go to the farm after the next day you go you will not see the cassava again. The cattle will come there.

A: So, with this challenge, how did A Rocha react to it?

CIS: So, we said that the way we CIS did so A Rocha too, they will look us, for we to do what, for us to come together and drive the Fulani people away. And me too, you can get more cassava for A Rocha people.

A: Okay, did work? Did help? In this situation, did it help this advice?

CIS: They can go to the Ghana government and tell them that now we have this project, this cassava project, and every year, I think A Rocha people think that they can get like 500 bags. You can see sometimes they will get 25 bags in each community, or ten bags. But you know that time the market too is going. So, when they go, they will talk to the Ghana government that looks at the Fulani people the way they can do. And all of us.

A: So, this you think would be the solution. Are there more challenges?

CIS: Aah, no.

P: Only this? Have you never had any kind of communication problems with A Rocha? You could also, for example, I mean I try to keep myself out of this research because it is not good to involve myself, but for example, you could say that you have struggled to understand my English. That is also something which is about communication; it is also a challenge. So, this kind of thing, can you think of any challenge to communication.

CIS: Come again.

A: Exactly! So, I was saying that challenges in communication can be any kind of. So, for example, it could be that you, for example, have a challenge with our communication because you don't understand my accent. So, can you think of this kind of challenge in communication with A Rocha? Any kind of things which has made the communication with A Rocha difficult. Maybe there has been a misunderstanding; maybe you haven't been happy about something?

CIS: You know sometimes, the way you are speaking, your English sometimes me I don't understand it. So, unless you speak for us in three words, so we understand it.

A: Three words. But did you understand my question?

CIS: I didn't understand.

A: Okay, let's think about the challenges in communication with A Rocha. In communication. So, this is an example, that for example, you have difficulties understanding my accent.

CIS: But now, I don't have anything.

A lot of disturbance in the interview, and Manon had a struggle understanding the questions.

Interviews with OM4D Project Actors

Field Supervisor (FS)

Date: 1.7.2021

Duration: 10:00 mins

A: So, you know the questions, let's start with the positive engagements, with CIS, farmers, or A Rocha.

FS: Last week?

A: Last two weeks, last week, and this week.

FS: Inspection training which we did in Gurubagu and Wawato. The information was given to the CISs about our arrival, and they were quite responsive. They came there, and they were able to attend the training. The training went successfully because everybody was participating, everybody was keen on the matter. The information was given to them on time, and they responded in time too. So that is a good thing that has happened last week.

A: And can you think of something positive for this week?

FS: This week was eh, this week we went to Bawena, we went to Gurubagu, Wawato again. I think the CISs have done what was expected of them. They were told that we are coming there to check the production, how the farmers are planting and how things are going on and what their challenges are. And they were able to do what was asked of them. They were given the information about what was expected, why we were coming there, and so they can also do their homework before you come there. So, it worked out well in Gurubagua and Wawato, but in Bawena, it was a bit sketchy, but we were still able to do some things that we were supposed to be doing.

A: So, what have been the challenges?

FS: I think last week the obstacle was on Wednesday, when in Mognori for instance when we expected that information should have been given to the CIS about our incoming way long before we were going there. So, he was informed on Tuesday that we are coming on Wednesday, while he (the CIS) had other plans. There were some communication hiccups in the sense of some of these field officers from A Rocha didn't communicate well on what they were going to do and their plan for the day, so everything was left hanging. So, we were not able to do the work that we were supposed to do. Or the group couldn't continue what they were supposed to do in the field because of non-proper communication.

A: So now we are talking about the situation where the Agro Eco team value-chain coach was coming from Accra, and she had sent an email to A Rocha, but it was not communicated to the CIS?

FS: Yea, that is where the mistake was. That was short of the communication hiccup and short of you know we also have to change the plans from what we were supposed to do because the Agro Eco value-chain coach also didn't take it into consideration when doing the planning the situation that might be at hand in the field. So, I think that's why things were a bit disjointed for that exercise on that day. Another thing is this week rather, Bawena, they were sent a text message, called, but because of lack of (phone) network, you cannot make direct communication, they are not easily available. That was a challenge. So, SMS was sent to them, but they didn't reply, so most of them (the CIS) went to their own business, which I

could respect, but it would have been better if they were there and then you know, we could efficiently do what we were supposed to do. We had only one person to work with, and then we were supposed to separate into teams so that everyone knew what we were supposed to do but because we had only one person to interpret in the field, we were not able to efficiently do what we were supposed to do. And that also cost some changes in our plan, going to the next community because we didn't have enough time to spend there and that is a factor of the situation that had happened in Bawena. On our side, I think the communication was sent early, but because of lack of network, sometimes it is a big challenge for transmitting the information. Yea, that is what happened this week. Yesterday I think everything went well, so far so good. Apart from that, this week, there is nothing much of a challenge.

FS: Of course, there is a challenge in terms of communication with the farmers; the farmers didn't talk about their problems, the challenges that they are facing, why they are not planting. So that brought some frustration. The lack of communication from farmers and inactions, I think, impacts the work that we want to do and also how we want to progress. So, I think so far, that was sort of the challenge. Yesterday the farmers didn't tell us beforehand why they were not planting and why they could not meet the deadline that we set for the planting. So then, we had to organize an emergency meeting where we allowed the farmers to express some of their opinions and their challenges. I think that is something we also have to look at and what has given us the background of why farmers are not working, doing the planting.

A: Can you also tell a bit more about the organizational cooperation with A Rocha and Agro Eco, because now also the value-chain coach was here.

FS: Communication with A Rocha, that one is difficult. I don't know how to say it. I think sometimes there is a positive, but most of the time it is negative. Because sometimes they act like they are not interested, and I think they are not being very honest about what is really in their mind. I think that could be a cultural thing. So sometimes they keep quiet, they do not talk about in time about their plans, and I think that is, the communication is not transparent enough. The communication is vague, not really clear enough. I think that has been so far the communication from their end to my end. I think my end I cannot say that it is perfect, but I have been more open to telling what I am doing, what I want to do, and also trying to find them in. But I feel like I don't want to be bossy to them and what I want to see is that they also know that this is what is expected from them. So, I think that also could be attributed to the fact that I didn't have my contract on time, so I didn't know basically what is expected from me from a legal point of view. So that's why I try not to impose myself to a certain degree. I think lack of transparency lack of clarity in their communication towards me is what has been a big challenge for me. Maybe that could be cultural, or maybe it could be intentional. I don't know what to make out of it.

A: It's okay, anything else?

FS: No, no, not right now. That is it.

Date: 19.6.2021

Duration: 4:30

A: So first, let's start with what has been a challenge or a problem.

FS: I think one of the challenges last week was the attitude of the CIS again. I will say you know they came, and their timing was not good. And you know, instead of doing what we

were supposed to do, they were busy with other things. I think that was not good. It really delayed the whole activity.

FS: And secondly, they were expecting to get paid for doing something which is good for themselves so, why, I cannot understand that. But as I made things clear to them, it's also a mindset, they become to understand. You know the intention and why they should do it. But in the beginning, they were just interested in me giving them money for them to be motivated. So, money should last them to do their work.

(The FS organized his thesis presentation where also the CISs were invited.)

FS: So, I think that was the challenge, that they delayed things because they didn't understand the reason why they were doing it and why they were doing it for themselves. So that was the communication, it was not clear to them, or they did not understand the whole thing. But as soon as I explained to them, they became to be more receptive and understanding of why they should be doing it and why it was important to do it. That was one of the negative things.

FS: But the positive thing was we were able to get as many cassavas sticks. Good communication and I also think by being available for, you know given the right information at the right time, communication, talking about it, helping each other. I think that was successful, continuing talking, deliberating on the same thing. I think that was the good thing, so last week we got, you know, most of the things that were planned were good.

FS: Yea, one negative thing is like, it is Ghana, it is Africa; I think the timing is our biggest problem. When I planned my thesis presentation, someone came late. And secondly, why the presentation was recorded, people were even answering calls, and I think that delayed me a lot and distracted me a lot. So, I think that was also an issue so far—last week.

A: I would also be curious about your experience working with a Rocha communication with a Rocha.

FS: I think it is terrible. I will say it is absolutely terrible. I don't know about other projects, but this project, I think it is terrible. Lack of communication, particularly the management, is very bad. They don't communicate. For the last two weeks, nobody has asked me anything about how the fieldwork is, so now I start to question who is managing this project.

FS: You know, like, that's something that I am asking myself recently before yesterday I started to question that. Is it lack of interest, poor communication, or, would I call it, is it disrespect, but it has been terrible. It is not good; there is nothing positive about it.

FS: I think yea, (one of the other workers of ARG), he is a good guy, he communicates every while and then, and you know if he is not able to do something, he says it, that is one positive thing. But concerning the project management, communication on my end is not working well. So, I don't know what it is on my end. It is like I am doing everything on my own. I try to communicate; I try to be open, but on the other side, it is not working.

A: Do you still want to say something else?

FS: No.

Date: 30.6.2021

Duration: 3:30 minutes

A: So, the first question is, describe one engagement that helped you to be more effective or successful at your work.

FS: One engagement is with the CISs, for instance, in Bawena, and Murugu. We had effective communication via telephone. So, visiting them, directly calling them in person, telling them that I am coming this day, and this is what I am expecting to do with you, and they agreed on it. Then the assignment was successfully carried out because of what they were supposed to do and what was expected, and the arrangement was made, and they made a follow-up, and that is how it worked out.

A: Okay, then describe one engagement or lack of engagement that made your work less effective or successful.

FS: Last week, I will say two things at least. One is going to a CIS; I was communicating to him that we are coming and that he should make sure that his people are told or informed about our coming. He told us that okay, we would do it, and I made a follow-up, and he told me he had done it, but in the end, he lied to me because he didn't inform, he didn't do the things he told me that he has done. So that was a miscommunication, and that has built up some trust issues within him and me, I think now.

(The Kpulumbo CIS had attended another meeting of A Rocha and was surprised that the NS's Project Manager had not informed the FS. He told the author that he was feeling shy to tell himself that he will not be available. However, he also did not for example inform his colleague CIS to take over the task.)

FS: Because this is the second time, he had done something like it, telling me that he has done something, while he hasn't done it, hasn't done anything about it. So that is miscommunication, and I need to look at why he is doing that. But this has affected my work twice, so there was a miscommunication between me, and the CIS and it is the fault of the CIS for not communicating well or doing what he is supposed to be doing.

FS: The second one is going to the community in Bawena, talking to a, trying to initiate a meeting. Whiles we were there it rained and the number of people that came to the meeting was below our expectations, and that was because of the rain. But I also felt like the farmers or the people in the community expect things just to happen to them rather than taking actions to accomplish them. So, lack of participation also affected the plan that we wanted to carry out, so therefore that was the issue.

A: Alright.

FS: Is that okay?

A Yea, thank you.

ICS MANAGER

Date: 18.6.2021

Duration: 30 mins

Participants:

ICS Manager nr.1 (M)

Author/Intern (A)

A: This is an interview with (the ICS Manager).

M: Thanks.

A: And we were talking about the challenges of communication with them, how do we refer to them, to the Agro Eco team involved.

M: I think we started with the question of why the planting is not earlier. If leftover to me, they prioritise this kind of ready-to-eat food to cultivate easily for the family and also to get instant cash. So left from now, what they do is that they always plant those kinds of crops, yam, groundnut, maize, what they can sell immediately, because let's say, maize, groundnut they yield in three months, you could harvest and sell. In comparison, the cassava and the yam take a longer time. So, in most cases, they prioritise to plant this maize, yam, all those things first before they start the cassava.

A: Can I ask, is it maybe because they are so poor that they have to do this to have something to eat, to have some money to live with? Or do you think it is just because they are?

M: I think it is in most cases when you look at it, they are called black business community, they are poor in that sense but left on to my own assumption, I would say that it is the practice which has been in for years. They practised those things for quite a long time. And what they do is that they plant what cassava is always considered something that is planted late, so it is also a kind of sensitization that we have trying to change this kind of mindset with early planting of cassava to gain the yield in shortest possible time.

M: Let me use an example of Mognori; some years back, when I was living there somewhere 1995-6 within that time period, Mognori was kind of a community that does a lot, as compared to Murugu, and other communities, cassava farming. We have a good market. We have this group of people that is called the Vala. The Vala come to Mognori every week; let's say if today is Friday, they visit the community every Friday to buy roasted gari. So, every farmer that is in Mognori tries to plant cassava as early as possible so that it receives the early rains, it matures fast, they process it for gari and sell. So, cassava was something they used to grow a lot in the community, as compared to yam and other things. Until some time that they stop getting a good market for, let's say that gari business stopped, and they equally had to go back to their own yam, maize, and groundnuts farming. So now that we have this kind of Agro Eco OM4D team coming by more cassava, I also think that this community should be more open; I don't have a market for my produce, someone has come, why not to respond to his demand. And then, at the end of the day, what I was looking for is achieved. I want the money, and they are coming and willing to give me the money. So, whatever I produce, they will buy. So left on to me, they should do the cassava fast, get the market, and continue with their own other crops. I think a good aspect of what I know we are talking to them about is that cassava doesn't restrict them from planting any other crop into it, not like adding chemicals, this kind of.

A: But the intercropping also is one reason for the late planting, because they want the yam to grow before they plant the cassava in.

M: Yes. Even with all the yams, they can plant the cassava in the yam. They plant the yam from February – March – April. Because the cassava comes in somewhere June – July or August, sometimes they plant it late somewhere in August. So, they get that kind of cassava which will stay for a year, or more than a year because they received rain before they were rooted. So, until the next year's rain, that will give them more tubers. So, I think that kind of challenges to change the current trend.

A: And how do you think we can help them to change this current trend? What should we do, how should we involve them in the decision-making, maybe? To recognize their own schedule.

M: I think that I have been involved in the communities for such a long time; that kind of little knowledge I can share for now is that the kind needs more sensitization. I think the team, let me say the Agro Eco team, should be doing early.

M: For the first year, we had a few challenges buying early cassava, so the moment they harvest, it will be encouraging for them to do it more; we give them a harvesting period and within that time, at least in a month. So, let's say we have given them December to harvest, so early January, we should start buying so that the cassava doesn't stay for long. If it does wait longer, they are discouraged from doing it. But if left on to me, if it is harvested today, in the next coming two weeks to a month, the cassava is taken away from them they have more cash, they can use it to do other things. We encouraged them, now I have the cassava, it didn't last even for a month, and they bought it, let me do more. Left on to me, that is what we should practice.

M: The second thing is that, okay, we have opinion leaders within the community, we have the chiefs, we have the group leaders that we can more or less encourage or involve in our discussions. These are people that sometimes they listen to more than the external folks. Work in the community once a week or once a month, but these leaders are there all the time. So, if we were able to sit, they themselves only and discuss with them in detail about our objectives, they again can sit with the group and let them understand that these people mean good for you and not the opposite. At least, I would encourage that we talk to the opinion leaders let them have separate discussions in the communities even before we get in. At least it should go well for the two parties; when we go in, it would be just a smoothening body, we just go in, and it goes well. I think so.

A: So, my next question is first with the buying, where was the challenge that you could not buy it directly, early? Or was it just that it was decided that this is the way you do it?

M: Okay. So, it is two ways, the first aspect comes to the office, and the second one also to the farmers. We communicated to them that in two weeks' time, we would come. I remember it very well; we told them to harvest in October, which was earlier, because sometimes in October it still rains. So, one communication came in to harvest in October; it doesn't work. So, it lasted somewhere till very late November, so they started somewhere the last week of November to January. So, within that time, they were still harvesting because our communication earlier on was that they should harvest somewhere in late October; it doesn't go on well financially because there is this kind of trend that you should follow. Now we were supposed to do the harvesting before, but now the farmers are not harvesting. That is where their financial issues, I guess, I think, but I don't work in the financial.

A: So, you are just guessing that is the issue?

M: Yes, that is the issue. But the moment they have their cassava, I think we had not promised them that we are coming to buy it, they were just sitting to be called, okay that tomorrow, or let's say within a week a particular date we are coming to buy. And we actually did it exactly like that. The price issue was also quite better than what we discussed with them earlier. Because I can quite well remember before the project started, they were busing cassava as low as 30 GHC for number 5 for the longest bag, for 30 GHC.

A: For the 50kg?

M: For the 100kg. So, we did our investigations around Murugu, Bawena, and this cut across. The highest they could buy was 50 GHC. But the time they were not getting a market at all, it was just 30 GHC. So, when we discussed it, we were okay; this is for the market, so we will buy it at 80GHC. That was the initial stage. So, we thought if they are buying at 50 highest,

we come with 80. Then later, when we started buying, we realized that no, the cassava, the market has improved, and let's also do better. So, the office said, okay, instead of buying that 80GHC, let's go 150GHC. We initially gave them 120GHC so that they could use it to do whatever they wanted to do, and now as they were still sitting down, the farming has just become, people are planting or doing other things we immediately go back with the remaining 30GHC that is with us as the bonus so that they could use that again to clear their lands and to invest more labor to help them to do the planting. And I think as I am sitting now all the bonuses have been paid. And farmers are now using them to do other activities.

(The bonuses were paid after the rainy season started. Some farmers e.g., in Murugu were saying that they did not start planting because they were still waiting for the bonus to use for hiring labor.)

M: A certain kind of challenge which I would also like to mention that also comes to the farmers, trust, or mistrust when we communicated that all the cassava you grow to us, we are going to buy. If I tell you that, please do the harvesting from today until next week, some still prioritize other different jobs. Let's see if I do ABC, then I get back to the cassava. But by that time, the cassava, let's say it has delayed the harvesting, it increases the drying. And then the buying is also delayed. So, most of them were harvested very late. Even when we were buying, we did not get the numbers. So that has also discouraged the office in that since. Our initial assumption on the field, we realized that we would get quite a good number of bags from each community. But when we got into buying the dried chips, we realized that it was not encouraging at all. So that had also to do a lot of with late harvesting or also not even harvesting. So, there is some kind of little challenge with some of the communities that we have little reading. Some harvest and dry it, and then the cattle go in to feed on all the cassava. So, it has really created a challenge for some of the farmers and also some of us.

A: My next question was going to be about that, that this kind of reasons which they give you, I wanted to ask you about the cattle thing, because I knew about it, that if you believe it is true, it seems like you believe it is true. So, another thing is with the prices, so when I went to the communities, one woman was saying that she was selling six bags of the 100kg with 200 cedis. Do you believe it is true?

M: Yes. I strongly believe it is true. In the very late period of the 2020 cassava, we were out of stock completely, everywhere you go, cassava. At the time, 200 cedis per bag was even conventional, not organic. Everywhere I go, there is no cassava. So, I have no option because I have to feed my family, so I have to go in and buy it at that price. And even when we started making the other purchase, all those things came into the argument and those things. And I can testify that I personally was buying cassava at 150 cedis somewhere late, let me say November, December 2020. So, I bought cassava at that time. So, when we equally made these things, in Murugu they were buying, some people would realize that somebody came to buy cassava as much as 250 cedis. So, if someone says that they sold cassava with 200 cedis, it is rare, but it could be true because I have also seen somebody buy some with 200.

A: So, what we can conclude from this is basically that the prices for the cassava are very volatile. So, how do you think we should deal with that or communicate about that in the communities?

M: Okay, it is a good question, but since prizes are, let me say, equal is not every time. We only encourage them to do more because only today we even paid more than what we promised them. So, we are also not anticipating that we buy with the same prize next year, this coming year, the buying season. So do as more as you can, and we also try to give better prizes and come to buy. So set examples like what we promised them, but we did better than

that. I think we bought almost two times the prize that we promised them. We bought it for 150 instead of 80; it is almost two times the price we gave them. So, we could take so better this year. So, I always think that okay, left to us, we promised that we are going to buy, so if we do this the same way and whatever good prize what we can bring to them, and they should be looking into that, to buying as we promised.

A: Then because most of the things which I hear, it is more about the communication with the farmers and the CIS, but I am also interested in the internal communication and the communication between the two partners, A Rocha and Agro Eco. So, could you maybe tell me like, also positive experiences with this communication and also challenges which have been there?

M: Okay, communities that we work with, my problem is I think, the greatest challenge I will mention before the positives is that accepting ownership of projects is keen. While in the community, someone is coming with a project; let's say I am coming to support you, this is your contribution, this is my contribution, and the project continues. So, you have to; as a community, you have to weigh both the balances. If it doesn't feel like you can do it, that is no problem; you are not ready. But now our communities which we work in, I don't think we have ever imposed an activity on a community. So, since we don't do that, and we have to come into dialogs before the project can start, these communities should be willing and ready to kind of accept the fault or, let's say, the reportive fault when it comes in. So, we should at least come to in conclusion that okay, it is a project that I accepted to do. The initial communication should go within themselves. If they understand the concept and they are willing to roll in, they should do as they are explained to. But today, okay, A Rocha, Agro Eco has a project, it is for them, while it is really for the community. So, at the end of the day, they should accept it that okay, A Rocha through Agro Eco has brought a project into our community. It is not for a Rocha or Agro Eco, but it is for us, the community members. I think the project has a very beautiful root there.

M: The communication also stated from, let me say the poor part of it was also coming from the office, the office, let me say A Rocha and also our immediate internal, the CIS. If information is passed through me in general in the community, in every community, I have no less than at least two CIS that passes information to the farmers. Even within themselves. So, if the communication comes from me both the CIS, okay do this in your community, and they fail to do it at the right time. It is a challenge. Sometimes you pass it to the CIS one, and he says that the other CIS is too informed, and that the community has been told. So, you get to the community, and there is not even one person that has heard the information apart from the one CIS you discussed with. That is a great challenge.

M: The second thing is the network; we have network problems in our communities; at the time that I have information from Accra, whoever is passing to me about coming to the communities tomorrow or next week for an engagement. Maybe I will be able to tell them just that morning when the project needs to be done. So, I talk to the farmers like ou okay, talk to the Mr. this morning, I was supposed to call you yesterday, but I couldn't, but we are coming today. You get there; the project will fail. The communication hasn't passed there at the right time. So, the network is one communication; getting from one party to the other one is also a great challenge. I would think that the CIS should be more delighted. So, I developed the text message thing personally. I text if I call, and I never hear you; I just leave a text message to call all the parties that you want to talk to. At least one of them, by chance, will have some network, and they will receive the information, and they will start to pass it to the other colleagues. So, I think that is for now what I have developed.

A: You think it works?

M: It works very well.

A: Okay, so how about communicating with Agro Eco about the challenges you are having here, like how like positive and challenges in the communication with the Agro Eco team.

M: So, I will start with the positives. Let me go back; I have to blame one party first because it is not good to put blames on anybody.

A: No, and it is not the purpose also.

M: But what I want us to do is, you see, I am a field worker, and I receive most of the challenges; they come to me. Traveling from Damango to any of the communities is a bit of, not just a kilometer. I think you have equally the knowledge. Sometimes you can travel for three or four hours to just to the community. So, leaving the house very early and coming home very late is another challenge for us.

M: But withstanding all this, the farmers, because we understand their, let's say, inmost behavioral and most active issues broadly. Some are taking medicine; some have to delay. I think I quite remember when we started the project in Bawena, a farmer came to the group and said no, he would not start the project until he saw that his colleagues were winning. So let me say that I brought the project and said, okay if we start, if it is positive, it will also come to you. So last year, when I went to the community, that farmer came to me, and I said, my brother, you are not part of the farmers because you are waiting for success before you join—others waisted their lives too. So, I am not going to make you, and I have that kind of challenge with that farmer. But that was just to tell him that I wasn't okay with what he initially did, so there was a negative thing you said at your side. The challenges are coming, but he saw the positives himself. Such a person, before you accept them, you have to make a statement that it was not good.

M: So, coming back, because there was a good implication, if it would have been something negative, that is something which I think we should always talk about. But my blame is also to the Agro Eco team, because sometimes because they are not on the field, they used to say that okay, I want this to be done within this time, which is not visible. It is simply a book knowledge compared to the practical work aspect. If you are using the book knowledge, you will get things wrong in our communities. You read the book, so understand the book, but we structure it in our way. The book works but in a confined way.

M: Just this year, very clear information came to A Rocha that the planting should start and finish within two weeks. Now we are getting the challenge of getting planting materials. Already the challenges to get even the farmers to come to that kind of meetings which we want to have at the right time. We have a lot of challenges, so if we do not consider one of these challenges to learn, I think it is wrong. Last year they told us to start planting somewhere in January and December, which is, during that time, we don't have rains. Even if you start planting in March, it is a challenge because the rains are just about to begin. So, if you plant in March, okay. Getting rains late March and then the next coming months, the cassava might survive. But in December, January, February, you are wasting your planting materials, and they will not survive, I know it.

A: So, you feel they are missing the information from the field or are not considering it that much?

M: Exactly.

A: Okay, I think that is what I can think of right now. Is there anything you want to add, something important which you wanted to mention?

M: Okay, I would; since it is kind of an interview, I try to give the best I can. I started working under the truism board, Ghana truism board, before I even joined this organization, and I like to be corrected. You know I wasn't born an English person; I only learned it. So, my English is not good, I know. My writing is not good; I know a lot of things I do are not that good. But if I have the time to communicate with someone, I try to make sure they also tell me what I did wrong and what I did right. Mostly I want the wrong one because that is where I plant a good side, and I will be able to correct it if it is something negative. So, while I was doing all this, I said that if I make that kind of English error, please just stop me and talk to me and I will be able to amend it. If not, maybe whatever at the end of the day you can still tell me.

M: But let me also comment the office of a Rocha, that we have a good relationship with the staff. And the success of every organization is that when you have a very good communication background, that information passes you just at the right time you want it to be passed to you; I think this or everything you pray for will be achieved. My comments should go first to the office or our communication within ourselves or timely communication. Also, the management, let me say our immediate manager (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager), is also that kind of person who I don't see to be that bossy type. Some leaders consider themselves, so okay I am the boss, so whatever, but he is that type that brings himself at the low level for corrections, and I don't see whatever we should do it, but if you are a good leader, you want to be on top of your job, you really need to at least bring yourself to the understanding of everybody who works with you. So, I would just say thank you to him.

M: So that is what I can say for now. And also, within ourselves here, and also you coming. I think we have also noticed so many things about you people, about you. You have been here for a short time, but I can tell you a little bit about what I know about you, in terms of being open-minded, you are good in that and working with, let's say I have worked with tourists, I have worked quite a difference, so I know the assumption, so you are the type that also, you are free, you interact freely, you accept, easily make changes, per my delusion I know that you are off to learn. And whatever you do, I also see success in it. Also hard working as well so for the very short time I cannot say so much about you, but I know that you are infused to do your work.

A: Thank you.

M: And thank you as well. That is what I can say for now.

NORTHERN SECTOR PROJECT MANAGER (NS'S PROJECT MANAGER)

Date: 18.6.2021

Duration: 17:00 minutes

Participants:

A Rocha Ghana Northern Sector Project Manager (PM)

Author/Intern (A)

(The record was started in a middle of a conversation)

A: I would also like to hear a kind of a variety, you have told me a lot about the struggle with communication with the communities, and those examples are welcome; I like to hear them. But I would also like to hear if there is anything you want to say with the communication with the Agro Eco team?

PM: Oh, I don't think there has been any, as not from my side, there is no challenge. Because we have all the communication channels, which we can use, the emails, phone calls, WhatsApp, I don't think there has been any.

PM: Okay, maybe the only clear one that comes to mind is the recent or the past sensitization on which you did. Okay so, there was an idea that because we don't have enough budget, I think (Agro Eco's Director) was sending this email that Agro Eco was going to take care of the cost of the baseline, and then (AE's Data Manager who coming to do the Midterm Survey) came saying that he is without cash and later that, ou you didn't know that Agro Eco was supposed to take care of that. Because I thought it would be clear in the email that it was quiet, very clear in the email. Then later, when we went, we actually had to do a follow-up email. So, I think that is the only one that comes to mind, but other than that, we have normal communication.

A: Maybe is there any aspects which you can, I there anything, I know that it is always more difficult to think about the positive examples because we take them as normal. But can you think of any examples when you were really satisfied with the communication and thought that it went very well?

PM: Normally, these things are difficult to remember because Emm. With the community or with Agro Eco?

P: Either, it can also be with your employees, with the A Rocha people.

PM: Hmm. Something that has worked.

A: And I also meant to ask for a little bit of clarification with the budget. So, I understood that there is no fixed budget for the whole project. Did I understand that correctly?

PM: That is that there is no fixed budget?

A: Yea, for the project.

PM: No, what I meant is that for the first baseline that we did, it was directly from Agro Eco; it didn't come...

A: I mean, when we were talking earlier about it, you mentioned that it is always a bit difficult because everything has to be applied separately on the budget because there is no fixed budgeted for the project. I'm just checking if I understood correctly. So, there is no fixed budget for the project, and also no working hours for the project?

PM: working hours, mm, fixed budget. Okay, so what it means is that when we started the project, there was a budget that was being paid. But it doesn't mean that it includes staff time. So, staff time is supposed to be our, probably A Rocha's side or commitment there so, it is supposed to come from A Rocha. So, there is no budget for staff. So, it is part of it, so we need to find time and have it done. So that is what I remember saying about that. The other activities initially had a budget and how the whole thing was programmed was that if things went well and we had good sales, it was supposed to be a self-financing this thing. So whatever profit margin is reached from the sales of the cassava, after all the payment and stuff like that, comes back to me into that. So, for example, this year that we couldn't meet our target is that we are insufficient it some of these things.

A: So, it is because of the delay of the selling that now you are out of money?

PM: ah, I wouldn't say it is because of the delay. I would, of course, what we were expecting was not something that was going to be true. We were not actually self-sufficient; we thought that would be something we would be able to get up for the project because

A: Because the amount was too small?

PM: Yea, already the amount we were going to realize from the sales is not also going to meet that. What I mean is that for the first year, the second year, we had extra found from some other doner like African Tigers for the activities. So, the whole idea is that we get to a point where we have the money coming. This year even the budget of the five 50 tons was not even something that was going to be able to sustain the project to some extent. So, what comes to the budget, I think the main issue that we have is that the project is quite expensive. The activities that are supposed to be done are quite expensive. But we don't have too much money for that.

A: What is expensive about it?

PM: The whole project.

A: But is it like the buying or?

PM: No, the buying is just a little aspect; the buying is not even expensive. It's the prefinancing which is expensive because you expect the money. So, the buying is not expensive but running the project itself is expensive, the audit (for the formal third-part organic certification) is expensive.

A: How is it expensive? Ah, the certification.

PM: Yes, the payments and those things are expensive, the buying is not expensive. And you know last year we made a lot of investment into physical capital, into building, the tricycles, and the mills and all those things. Those things are expensive; those initial investments took a lot of our budget. Because of most of those things that we budgeted for, I realized that we have under-budgeted the building for instance. So, we have to modify the, initially, we were supposed to do something similar to the, what we have in Murugu to do in Bawena, having the warehouse attached, doing the same thing in Kpulumbu. But the money was not enough. We had to do some modifications, so we just do Bawena, and then we also have a shea warehouse which we can also use because shea is seasonal. So those kinds of modification, but even that spend more. So that is the issue. There were a lot of things that were not in the budget, and we had to adapt. And make room for, we were learning a lot we realized that ou, we were not supposed to do this than we had to go, we were supposed to do this, we had to make room for it so.

A: How was the planning process? Who did the budget and the planning?

PM: So, we did it with me, (Administrative/Documentation Officer), (Agro Eco's Director), and (the VCC). But we did and sent it to them. So (Administrative/Documentation Officer) is the one who did it directly with me, and then we sent it to (Agro Eco's Directos).

A: So, the communication in common was direct to (Agro Eco's Director) or thorough (Administrative/Documentation Officer) to (Agro Eco's Directos). Is this correct?

PM: Directly, I would say financially yes. Every financial report goes to the head office, so the accountant and (Administrative/Documentation Officer) will do the reporting. But if it is technical, we do direct reporting.

A: And how frequently are you giving information kind of from down to top management?

PM: We do, not daily, but we do. I even missed Jaquells call a few minutes ago.

A: Mostly, it is like casual communication via phone or messages?

PM: Yea, we do, and we do a lot of emails, but our communication is based on, when we plan, we have activities to do, for instance, you want to do contract signing, you communicate about it, so you are ending your budget, your timeline and then you report back. Then there are daily things that you pick up you call that, okay, there I this thing coming up, there is this thing, so those once we do it all the time.

A: So apart from the financial reports, do you also write another kind of report about the progress of the project?

PM: so, we don't do formal reports, but we do progress reports to make it (?) I think sometimes (Administrative/Documentation Officer) would just write, I say this and this, and this has happened over the period; this is the feedback. We don't do weekly reports; we don't do daily reports; I think those once are quite too (?). And more of the progress reports are quite a particular way. You have something, and then you report so and so on.

A: So how about the communication with your employees, so (the ICS Managers), how do you communicate with them?

PM: it is the conventional way of communication; we pick up phone calls every day, we do WhatsApp every day, we do face-to-face discussions all the time. I mean, we are in contact all the time. Fine, maybe not about the cassava project, but everything that there is to discuss we talk about it, so we do face to face, the calls, and the WhatsApp and talk about it.

A: Do you have team activities, like team meetings or this kind of thing, or you just are just doing continuous casual communication?

PM: No, we normally do team meetings, but because we are virtually almost all the time not together, it's very difficult, not difficult, we still try to do it, we do team meetings as and when we are all available. Sometimes it is a bit difficult to have everybody there. For instance, (the ICS Manager) is around there today, (the assisting ICS Manager) is not around because she is not feeling well, Ike (another ARG worker) is not around, then when they come back, I am also leaving town, so I will not be around. But we are trying to do it all the time. Then we have a team meeting, normally on Mondays. As if it is convenient, but anytime if not we all find ourselves, we just talk about it. But that is for more, longer-term planning issues, for more strategic planning issues, but not for the day today. That one, we need to just pick up the call or have a common platform that we are doing this, or can we do this.

(During the internship there was no team meetings organized apart from those insisted by the author or the FS. The author does not know if the ARG Damango team had meetings without the author and FS.)

A: You have a common platform?

PD: Yea.

A: What kind of?

G: A WhatsApp platform.

A: So, a WhatsApp group?

(The author and FS were not invited to the WhatsApp group.)

PM: Yes. So, you just put it there; (the ICS Manager), can you follow up when it is ideal what is going on. To the day today, but if it is more long-term. For example, we are planning to do construction. Or if we are going to a major season. We try to do, at least once a month.

A: Can you think of anything else you want to mention?

PM: No.

VALUE-CHAIN COACH (VCC)

Date: 23.06.2021

Duration: 9:40mins

Participants:

Value-Chain Coach of Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute OM4D Project (VCC)

Author/intern (A)

A: So, this is an interview with (the VCC). You are the value-chain coach from OM4D. So, the first question is, or we can also start with the challenges, it is normally a bit easier for people. So, let's start with what has been an engagement with the farmers in the communities, which has made your work less effective or successful, or the lack of engagement.

VCC: Thank you. I think the major challenge with the community or with engagement in the community has been with their commitment. Because there should always be a gradual improvement in the change of mind, change of attitude, that is a bit sluggish, the commitment of the communities, engaging their thinking and perception and doing things. They do it still because they have not seen the business yet, the business mind.

VCC: Also, another major challenge is in terms of communication how to communicate a message to them easily; it is quite difficult. Because you have to go through the CISs, from the ICS A Rocha, A Rocha has to also communicate the information to the CISs in the communities. Sometimes there is a distortion of information, or it is being delayed. Because there is no internet, no good internet connection, something that has to take some minutes can take days before it gets to feedback. And it also prolongs the whole process, not achieving your target on time. So that has been the major challenge.

A: Do you have maybe a specific situation in mind where this happened to get a really like specific example. This is good information, but just to have it really specific.

VCC: I think most of the time I would say it comes from A Rocha because of how the information is given down, but I think I need to put information on emails always and if the person does not see the email on time, then it is going to delay communicating.

VCC: Like before I came to the field, I did my June visit scenario for the field, sent it by email and also by WhatsApp. I even discussed it on the phone, whether it's visible doing this at this time. There was a positive response. But unfortunately, coming down to the ground, the right information was not communicated to the communities. So, one CIS in the community, for example, in Mongori, was not available, he did not get the message on time, he was doing other activities, so he had gone to work instead of having time for you. So that is one mistake in the engagement.

VCC: Another is meeting the Gurubago farmers. I think the challenge was communicated, that we are going to meet them in their various communities but the meeting way in one

location, so the same morning they had to try to get information to Gurubago who was on the further side to let them change their plans to come down to Wawato to help the activity to be carried out.

VCC: So, the major challenge with communication engaging with the farmers one is also proximity and maybe also the ICS Managers not taking a quick response to look at responding to information. Having the information at hand is there. So, the solution to that would be, I think, a regular, as ICS as an individual to have a regular exchange of emails.

VCC: And also, if you can ask questions, you can ask questions when you need explanation, what do you mean by this, what do you expect, if it is not clear. So, there should be asking for clarification so we can all be in the same place and have the same plan in mind, too, so we can achieve our planned activities. Otherwise, you have to always go back to. Like today we could have visited more farms, but because the CIS didn't have much time for us, we had to end it because they had other things to do. Or sometimes to reschedule it for another day so we can meet the target.

A: Okay, that was very good. It was exactly what I wanted from the whole chain of communication examples with the A Rocha people, so if you can think of something positive which has made your work more efficient, more successful.

VCC: Okay, positively I would highlight the project lead; I must appreciate the commitment coming from the project lead.

A: Do you mean (the Agro Eco's Director)?

VCC: Yes, (the Agro Eco's Director). Because there is a full commitment from the lead. And it is also ensuring that it is successful. Every time he is asked what is happening on the field, he comes to the field himself to see also what is happening. It gives the people on the ground hope or the assurance that the project has a future.

VCC: However, on the ground, I think there hasn't been that positive response from the side of A Rocha management. Sometimes there is a lot of delay coming from them because of the other engagements coming from the landscape. So, the project lead has a good response.

VCC: I would also think that the CISs are also sacrificing much of their time because they are doing, let's say, their interest, at least the few who can read and write. They are able to sacrifice their little time to do this work. It's like a paid job; they are able to sacrifice their time in the community, keeping records for each farmer, visiting their farms, doing inspections to help the project progress. So, I think the commitment from the CISs is also appreciated. But we will still need more from them. And the more would also come from them when they are also regulated; they are also given that little support that they need, like fuel for them to do the field visits.

VCC: But this year, for instance, the 2021 activity plan has been shifted several times. Because the ICS person is not doing well, they are not going to the field to check whether the farmer wants to plant or not. If you don't visit the farmer, he doesn't feel pushed to do his work. So, when they also receive the fuel, we give them a little pay, or also regulation, they will also go to the field, and they are happy to do their work, which will reflect the farmers doing good and to the commitment. So, these are the positive and also the negative. I would say so far, working on this project for four years in the communities.

A: Okay, thank you.

MARKETING COACH (MC)

Date: 24.6.2021

Duration: 14:30

Participants:

Marketing Coach of Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute OM4D Team (MC)

Author/Intern (A)

A: So, this is an interview with (the MC), and your title is marketing coach?

MC: Marketing coach.

A: Okay, so I have two questions. My research is about communication. My first question is that you would describe a positive engagement within the project or with the participants of the project, which has helped you to make your work more efficient or successful. And my second question is an engagement or lack of it which has made your work less efficient or has made you incapable of being successful because of that. And you can also tell general things, but I hope that you also tell really practical stories, like happenings or of these engagements. So, I get more detailed information.

MC: I think I will start with the positive.

A: So, I hope you give your examples with the communities, with A Rocha, with the Agro Eco team also.

MC: Okay, then let me start with Agro Eco. Positive experiences have been setting up an internal control system is not something I was really intimate in terms of knowledge. I had a general idea but then coming into the project, interacting with (the VCC), being part of the process on the way also made me learn more about having a whole internal control system in place that is able to monitor performance and how that is important for organic farming/organic agriculture. So that is one aspect I see as positive.

MC: And also, interactions with the farmers, learning from the farmers, since I also have a farm, but I don't know everything about farming. The practices they do here is different from what we do at our farm. So, let me see, I want to give you a practical example so that it is not just relative. Let's just get back to that. I mean, it's just interesting to see how they are doing things.

A: If you want, we can add it when it comes to your mind.

MC: Okay, I will add it. With interactions with A Rocha, in terms of positives, it is a different landscape than we are used to. So, A Rocha is able to facilitate entry into the landscape. Somebody needs to take and introduce you to the people and help to build relationships with the people. A Rocha facilitating that I would say is positive for them. Their familiarity with the terrain as they have been here for so long, is also helping.

MC: It also helps you to get better perspectives. For example, with the farmers, maybe they are giving you information, as farmers do. A Rocha can also give you the other side of the story. Arochas viewpoint may be different from what the farmers are communicating, so sometimes it helps you to balance and weigh information you are receiving. A Rocha gives you an alternative opinion; the farmers also give you another. So, you are able to balance, to really get different perspectives.

A: If you want to say something about the CISs, you can also...

MC: Okay. CISs I find that the CISs have been quite good to an extent, even though their work is a bit constrained from whatever challenges they have. I think for their communication, although problematic sometimes in terms of connecting to the farmers, it is even higher than dealing directly with a Rocha staff. I think you get to get a more detailed point of view from the CISs. They are living in the community so. That's it.

A: Yea, that's very good for the positive. Then the challenges.

MC: Challenges, I want to be fair with the challenges.

MC: Somewhere along the line, either information gets distorted or is not accurately conveyed or is misunderstood. It happens on both sides.

MC: I don't know whether it is because A Rocha staff is on the field a lot, when you send an email, which can easily just be printed and follow the instructions which are given. Maybe because the person is going to communicate with the CISs over the phone to relay instructions, the CISs may not take notes or be able to record it. Then the CISs go to give an instruction which was not what we sent.

MC: Or sometimes, conveying information gets delayed, doesn't happen in a timely manner, and then something really goes wrong. Sometimes it is too late to resolve it. So that is what A Rocha staff struggle with. Sometimes the problem is bureaucracy. They have a reporting line that must be respected. But then also you have to realize that in the field, those systems don't necessarily work well.

A: What do you mean by the reporting line?

MC: Okay, so a reporting line is like an organizational structure. So, we have (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager), who is the project manager here, then we have (the Administrative/ Documentation Officer) who acts as project manager and acts as a kind of layer of authority; let me say between A Rocha head and then A Rocha field office. But (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager) is in charge of the project, but most of the communication goes to (the Administrative/ Documentation Officer). And she collects information from here and then responds. Sometimes the communication too is not timely, sometimes the information is wrong, sometimes (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager) is not in the communication at all.

MC: So, I think that structure, now it is better because we have people at the field, and you are working directly with the office on the field. So that problem I have seen less because it has been resolved in a way. But in the past, that was one of the issues.

MC: And then, I don't know, but I also got a sense of some kind of antagonism. I don't know where it was coming from, whether that was maybe just miscommunication or you say something, and it was misinterpreted, or your tone is taken out of context.

A: Could you put it into a practical example?

MC: Okay, like an example of something like that, I was telling (the Administrative/ Documentation Officer) about something I witnessed in the field, and her response to me was not satisfactory. I got the impression that her reaction was defensive based on the way she communicated to me.

MC: However, I wasn't actually criticizing the work done but it was received in a critical way. It was just because I wanted to stress the need for marketable quality produce. That was my concern. But then it was received like, well you were there, is that what you saw in the field, in a sarcastic tone. But it is not helpful. Nobody is involved in a project just because they want to waste their time. People are involved because they see that there is some impact

that can be made. And they want to be part of that story. Nobody is in a business to judge anybody; we just want something to work.

MC: So, there are countless such scenarios. But even in Agro Eco fieldwork too. That kind of, you know, what's the word for it, there was that kind of friction when I first joined.

A: Also, within the Agro Eco?

MC: Even within the Agro Eco team, when I first joined. You know, I don't know what discussion went on between the Agro Eco Directors with (the VCC). However, some information reached me even before there was a final conclusion at the head office. However, over the course of time the communication has improved and any issues we face are no different from any other working environment.

MC: With a negative experience with the farmers, a practical example of an outcome of negative communication is this cassava now which we have in the storage. We have ten tons. We were expecting a certain amount, which we were assured that it was there. So, there is a problem for the CIS; there is a problem with what the farmer is telling the CIS or there is a problem in what is being communicated to the marketer.

MC: So, what ended up happening is that we have ten tons with peel, even though there was an expressed instruction, please peel because whiles we were at Biofach, we got information that we need that. And we were told that this was communicated to the farmers. That no, that is what they are doing now. Only to reach the end and then to be met with a product that you didn't expect. That is an example of a negative effect of miscommunication or bad communication.

A: That's all you have for now?

MC: That's all.

A: Okay, thank you.

Precursor Discussion with the ICS Managers

Date: 14.5.2021

The main challenges were related to the work in the communities.

The ICS Managers expressed that the farmers do not see the project as their own and, due to that have a lazy attitude. It is seen to benefit A Rocha, and they see it as doing a favor for A Rocha.

Farmers are asking for farm inputs and implements and are not willing to invest themselves.

There is also mistrust from A Rocha to the farmers because the farmers seem to on purpose not to follow the internal standards (e.g., chemical usage).

Farmers also did not harvest and sell to A Rocha but sometimes sold to other buyers. There is a lack of commitment.

This was because of the higher market price of cassava, which also caused the late buying. Farmers were not willing to sell the cassava to A Rocha with the initially agreed price as they saw that they deserved a higher price than the market price for growing their cassava organically.

Sometimes the farmers also try to hide information.

Another challenge that was expressed is that there is more work than they can do, causing especially ICS Manager to feel tired and stressed.

Also, some tasks cannot be done 100% because there is no capacity for them.

Farmers' Focus Group Discussions

FGD: MURUGU

Date: 25.6.2021

24 participants

17 men, 7 women

Duration 45 mins

17 who joined 2019, 5 who joined 2020, 2 who joined 2021.

The CIS of Murugu did the translation (T)

Recording type: note-keeping

A: Describe useful engagements with A Rocha/Agro Eco that have helped you be more efficient or successful.

T: A Rocha brought the market for cassava before their cassava which they did not consume, would get rotten in the store because there was no market.

A: In reference to the project, there have been many requirements for organic farming. Are there engagements that have helped them to fulfil these requirements?

Describe difficulty or challenge caused by engagement or lack of it which makes your work less effective or less successful. Challenges in the communication with A Rocha or Agro Eco.

(One of the older lead farmers): The farmers were farming with their children, but now because of the education, the children do not help at the farm. They are working on the farm alone, and that is why they use chemicals. With organic farming, they cannot use chemicals. When they first start with yam and groundnuts, for one person, it takes time before they can plant the cassava. They hope they can get a loan so that they can plant the cassava early.

Woman: Now they should weed last year's cassava, but they do not have time.

A: With these challenges, how is A Rocha reacting, and how would they hope A Rocha reacts to these challenges?

T: They do not know what A Rocha does.

A: Do they think A Rocha knows and understands that the farmers have this issue?

T: Yes. A Rocha always asks them to plant in April or May, but when they come, they see that there are still a lot of challenges.

A: Are there more challenges, also some which have happened a year ago or two years ago?

T: Assuming he has 10-20 bags of dried cassava at the farm. They hope that A Rocha helps them with the transportation to the milling facility.

A: Has A Rocha done anything about it?

T: No.

T: There are two prices, the organic one and the inorganic one. It would be nice if the price for the organic one is higher than the inorganic one. The price of organic cassava is 120 GHS (+30 bonus), and conventional is 250 GHS.

A: What did A Rocha tell you about the price?

T: If it is true, they will just sell as conventional with the higher price.

T: A Rocha told them that the organic price would be different from the conventional price.

A: they didn't give you a specific price per bag?

T: No.

T: A Rocha told them that they would be given a tricycle to transport the cassava from the farm to the milling facility, but they had not heard anything from it.

Woman: They had cassava, but whenever they would peel cassava, it would just stay and rot. When A Rocha saw this, they said that it was very bad and said they would find someone to buy the cassava. A Rocha said they would find a higher price for the organic cassava. But now when someone is using chemicals and doesn't use his waist to suffer; one who uses manual weeding and suffers should have a higher price than the conventional. That is what worries them too much.

T: Last year, peeling, they said they should do "lashing" (cleaning of the peel instead of peeling); some prefer to peel them instead of cleaning.

T: A Rocha gave some brushes to do only the "lashing."

T: Some say it's easy; some say it's difficult.

Woman: for the organic cassava, there is a season to buy them, and they will send all their cassava and get the money. After some time, the conventional cassava buyers come, and those who sell will get a higher price than those who sold the organic cassava.

T: They have three challenges: transportation, small loan, and pricing.

A: if we go back to the first question, I want to look at the flow of information; there has been a lot of information given to you about how to do organic farming.

T: They should not kill all the trees on the farm; they should have 10-20 trees should be on the farm.

A: do you feel you were provided all the necessary information to become an organic farmer?

T: was the information provided to you at the right time?

T: They were happy, but they could not tell the time when A Rocha people wanted to work to be done, but they were happy to receive the information.

T: What was the big challenge between them, and the A Rocha people was that they told them that they should harvest in November, but if they harvest in November, then the cassava is green and not the quality they want? So, it was agreed that they start the harvesting in January.

T: Now they were told that they need to add a different crop on the old field and, A Rocha will help them to sell it.

T: Question, when they bring the cassava to the mill with the tricycle, is A Rocha paying for it?

A: What has A Rocha said about it?

T: They have not said anything. It's now that he is asking this because I am asking these questions.

A: is there anything else that they want to mention?

Woman: maybe later they can help them to sell organic gari (creamy, granular flour made of cassava)?

FGD: Gurubago

Date: 30.6.2021

25 participants

5 men, 20 women

Duration 35mins (Together with the second part of the FGD regarding the research the author did for her internship report)

19 who joined 2020, 6 who joined 2021.

One of the CIS of Murugu did the translation (T)

Average age: 49,08 Six people less than 45 years old

44% of participants had planted (CIS record book).

A: my research is about communication. By communication, I mean the human interactions where we exchange information. And in this organic cassava project, I want to understand what things in communication have been good for you and what has worked for you. And which things have been difficult for you or have caused problems. I hope you come up with practical examples of what has happened and detailed explanations, so I get a deep understanding. I want positive experiences whit communication, and the question is:

Describe useful engagements with A Rocha or the CIS that have helped you be more efficient or successful.

T: One important thing about A Rocha or the CIS is that they came to tell them how to plant the organic cassava, and they are not using chemicals in it. And after the planting, if they harvest it, they will sell and get money, and they can also eat the organic cassava, and it will be healthy for them.

A: So, you got a lot of information?

T: A Rocha was also engaging them that when they farm the organic cassava, they shouldn't use the chemicals in the field, and they shouldn't kill all the trees on the cassava field.

T: If they take robbers or waste materials to the farm, they shouldn't throw them away, but they should bury them.

T: No burning.

A: So, I can see that you have for sure received the information well; you have learned it.

A: You ever said that if they clear the field, they should not burn the grass, but they should leave it to mulch, and if they have less than ten trees on the farm, they should plant some.

A: I have an additional question for you; has all this information you have received been useful for you?

T: It's useful. Because of the organic cassava farming, they were not planting okra, but because of the intercropping, they are now also planting okra on the farm, and it's also useful.

A: Okay, I'm happy. Then let's talk about the challenges in communication. Again, with the organic farming, with A Rocha. (I did not have time to ask the question before answers were coming).

(Describe difficulty or challenge caused by engagement or lack of it which makes your work less effective or less successful. Challenges in the communication with A Rocha or Agro Eco.)

T: The challenges they are facing are many. Anytime they weed inside the cassava field, they are using their income, their money, to do that. And then, as they haven't come to buy, they don't know what benefit they will have after harvesting.

T: She's also talking about "kanka", those pests, those small small things, the one which you snapped at the other guy's farm (termites) that are worrying them.

A: And now when you think about these challenges, and we think about the communication part of it, how have you communicated about it to A Rocha? And how has A Rocha reacted?

T: In terms of pest and disease, they have been telling A Rocha, and A Rocha has been telling them that they should use neem tree leaves and spray the cassava.

A: And did they try it out?

T: That A Rocha told them they should use neem tree leaves and spray the cassava, but in this community, there is no neem tree.

A: In this community, there is no neem tree? Then there is a problem, I see. Did they tell A Rocha that there are no neem trees here?

T: They haven't told A Rocha that there are no neem trees.

T: One person was saying that there was one here, but it is not anymore.

A: Okay, more challenges?

T: They just keep emphasizing on the weeding, how to get money and hire labor to do the weeding.

A: How did A Rocha react to your concern?

T: The last time when A Rocha came, they informed that it is the cassava they will come and buy. They will benefit from it so after harvesting they will get something.

A: Okay, but they are still worried?

T: Yes

A: So, the answer was not satisfactory?

T: It was not satisfactory.

T: She wants to say that you go and see how there are grasses because of lack of income to weed.

A: Did A Rocha tell you how much money you get from cassava?

T: No.

A: So, you don't know how much money you will get when you sell it?

T: They don't know.

A: Any other challenges? Or that's all?

T: Others are talking about cassava sticks. They do not have the sticks. They are buying them from their colleagues, and it is not even there to buy.

A: did you tell the CIS?

T: They are saying that they have been saying it always, but nobody has come to (help them?).

T: It was at the meeting, they discussed it, and we (the CIS) also heard it. Nobody has come to tell it directly to us.

A: Okay, so they are saying that they told you, and you are saying that they told it at the meeting but did not tell you personally.

A: Okay, anybody can think of anything else?

T: You were saying that you will come and buy it, just for tomorrow's month, will it be possible for you to come and buy it?

A: the cassava?

T: I said (to them) that it is only after the rains. I told her that A Rocha said that after the rains, when the rains stop, that particular time they will come and buy it.

T: They are talking about that their main issues are the income to the farm.

(This the rest of the FGD discussion was for the data collection of the internship report done by the same author)

FGD: BAWENA

Date: 02.07.2021

Duration: 1:50 (together with the second part of the FGD which is not included in this study)

Participants: 21, from whom 4 women and 17 men

Translator: Issahaku Alhassa (T)

No relation to the OM4D project (worker at Mole National Park).

Author (A)

A: Most of you already know me because I have been here quite often with A Rocha to help with the organic cassava project.

A: But today, I am not here to work with A Rocha; I am doing research for myself, for my studies.

A: This is also not part of your work as a farmer but an extra effort you are putting in, and that is why for the time which you are giving to me, I will also give you something small as a thank you.

A: I want you to understand that it is not a normal thing; it is just because this is a special situation as I am doing my research.

A: My research is about communication. By communication, I mean the human interactions where we exchange information.

A: I have the first two questions about communication for you. I want you to think about the organic cassava project and your work as a farmer.

A: I hope you come up with practical examples of what has happened so that I can get a detailed and deep understanding of the whole question.

A: So first, I want you to think about positive experiences with communication. I want you to describe engagements with A Rocha, the CIS, or other farmers, which has helped you to become more efficient as a farmer.

T: What is the definition of a CIS? Are they aware of it?

A: You don't know what a CIS is? Iddrisu, Aziz and Sheibu are the CIS.

T: Okay, the question again.

A: I want you to describe an engagement with A Rocha, the CIS, or other farmers which have made your work as a farmer, as an organic cassava farmer, more efficient or saucerful.

A: Let's start with a Roca, describe me an engagement with the which has made your work more efficient.

T: (CREMA member) That there is a positive income with A Rocha. Initially, we were not farming cassava here. When A Rocha came, they started telling us about cassava, and when they went into the cassava farming, at least they would always get profit out of it. So that is why he said there is something positive about it.

A: So, there are markets for cassava; A Rocha brought you the possibility to grow and sell cassava.

T: A Rocha came here but not only for cassava this beehive; they gave them some also to make income out of them. So, he thinks that is another A Rocha has done for us, and we are also making something out of it.

A: Okay, somebody wants to mention more things?

T: He thinks that A Rocha, they are making a lot of things for us here. Initially, we were farming groundnuts here. With A Rocha, A Rocha has made us understand that if you farm groundnuts in one particular place the following year, you can use it either to farm cassava or some other things. So they went into that practice, and it has helped us a lot.

A: So, you are talking about crop rotation?

T: Yes.

T: What he is saying is that with the organic when you use this thing to spray a particular area, and you plant cassava there mostly then, there is not always, so A Rocha has made us understand that it is good for us to stop using this thing, so we started doing the old like we were doing initially.

T: What he is saying is that initially, we were not aware that if you spray a particular place and put your seed there, when it germinates, and you are taking this always, it doesn't help our body. But A Rocha has made us understand that if you spray a particular place and you plant cassava there, that cassava is not always healthy for our body. Initially, we were not aware of that, but A Rocha has made us understand that it is not good.

T: She is saying that because she is the only woman here, she should give her contribution to us. What she is saying is that initially, these Bambara beans if you farm a particular place, if you use one particular place to farm more than three years A Rocha has made us understand that if you farm particular place cassava the following years you can try with Bambara beans, all these techniques it is A Rocha who has made us understand it.

A: So more in the crop rotation.

T: Yes.

T: What he is saying is that our mother here is the only woman here, but what he has to say is for the woman, but he is going to say something concerning woman. Initially, we were doing this shea nut picking here before A Rocha came. But when A Rocha came, A Rocha made us understand that when the season comes, a lot of things move around like snakes, and we used to have a snake bite every year. But A Rocha has given us (rubber?) boots.

A: So, they gave rubber boots?

T: Yes, they give them rubber boots.

T: What he says is that, whether cassava, maize, or yam, if you spray there and you plant it, if you take it at the end, there is a difference between where he pumped and where he didn't pump. It is A Rocha who told us this.

A: So basically, all these things you are telling me is that A Rocha has given you more information and understanding, or knowledge. Is this correct?

T: Yes.

A: So that is what has been communicated to you, knowledge.

A: Is there something you want to tell me about the way how they communicated this to you? How did they provide the information to you?

T: What they are saying is that considering the beehives and giving all the knowledge concerning those things, they have also taken it into practice. They are really seeing that there is an improvement.

A: So, they have learned, and then they, did it?

T: Yea.

A: Okay, very good. Then let's talk about the challenges, so things you weren't happy about, or they need improvement.

A: So, the question is similar. **Describe me an engagement with A Rocha, the CIS, or other farmers, that made your work as an organic cassava farmer less efficient or successful.**

T: That is negative impacts on the communication side. What he is saying is that A Rocha initially when you harvest your cassava and peel the cassava, we thought that we cut it like it will not be small small, but A Rocha said we should do it smaller. They even do the circular once you even get more sacks than the smaller once so when A Rocha will buy it, it will be less than the circular once. They have all agreed to what he said that it had affected all of them.

A: And when you think about the communication part, how was this communicated to you at the beginning, and when you communicated that you have a problem, what was the reaction?

T: Initially, what he is saying is that they didn't communicate with them as to how they wanted them to do the cassava. Initially, they thought that they would just do the circular once; that is how A Rocha will buy them. It was the latter part of it when A Rocha said they should do the smaller ones and they would buy them. And even when you want to do the smaller once the number of labors you send to your farms it will cost you a lot than the circular once. You will spend a lot on the labor when you are doing the smaller once than the circular once.

T: Even when the discussion they gave them some small sacks that they are going to be using, the later part they bring the bigger sacks again that they have been using.

T: The circular ones are even more expensive than the smaller ones. When you cut it bigger, it is more expensive than the smaller one (you get more money when you sell it in the conventional markets).

A: Let's talk about the price now. When you mentioned it, you said the bigger ones are more expensive. So now you are referring to last year's prices or?

T: The price of this year is more increasing than last year.

A: Okay, so this year's selling?

T: They made more profit than last year.

(The CIS is responding to the farmer)

A: I would like to know what you are saying. I would even advise you to be quiet because otherwise, you might affect the farmers' answers. (To the CIS)

T: So, we just have to take him out of it.

A: You can come back in 30 minutes or one hour. (To the CIS)

T: What he is asking you is that is it that the price they had last year you are asking is more expensive?

A: so, what I want to understand is what was communicated to them about the pricing and what was then what surprised them or was unpleasant for them?

T: So that is what surprised them during the communication that it was different from when they discussed it and then when they purchased it and what they paid.

A: How much did they say they would pay?

T: What I am seeing, what they are saying is that left with A Rocha they have a scale, what I have seen initially is that the price is concerning a small sack they had a maximum price, even cassava is buying at a higher price A Rocha said that they will still buy it at the agreed price that they discussed with them but A Rocha what they are doing is that they are putting it on the scale. It is the weight of the cassava that is giving you the price.

T: Initially, they didn't discuss with them that they were going to put it on the scale to put the price. But when they were coming to buy, they brought the scale and put it on the scale.

A: Okay, so they did not tell that the price is based on the weight.

T: On the scale, yeah. It was when they were coming to buy that surprised them.

T: Even with the way A Rocha asked them to do the smaller once if you put it in a big sack, and the bigger once weigh more than, the smaller once.

A: Alright, are there more challenges you want to?

T: What he is saying is that where we are farming in the community is far. So, before you do the harvesting, you have to send people to the farm to peel the cassava. Like if they peel the cassava, that is the laborers, so if they buy it at a low price, where do you even get money to pay the laborers is a problem.

A: Money for the labor?

T: Yes, you always run at a loss. Because if you take the money out of it, they didn't even buy the bags they don't want, and you always run at a loss.

T: What he is saying is that with the cassava farming initially with A Rocha we discussed that it is going to be, help me, and I will help you. It is going to, like if you didn't spray there and when it is time for weeding if you take laborers to weed the cassava, the amount that they will charge you, the money is always more than if you buy chemicals. So, if A Rocha is always ready that they will help us, so when it is time for weeding if they always knew that they could help us with some money, then we still weed inside. It is because we don't have money sometimes, this small money, you think it is not enough to get laborers to weed the cassava. It will force you to buy chemicals and weed inside. So, what he is saying is that if there is an agreement that when it is the time for weeding, maybe if the A Rocha is ready to help us with some money, then maybe we can get laborers to weed inside. And when you are doing the selling maybe you can also detract the money, they used to help you out of the price. That one is always good, but there is no help like that. That one makes them always they will start weeding normally, and in the end, they will go and spray inside. That is because they can't get money and get laborers to weed inside. They can't also weed alone; sometimes that makes them also use the spray.

A: What was the communication from A Rocha about this, what did they initially tell you, and when you told this problem, how did they respond?

T: Initially, we were not here farming cassava because of selling. We were farming cassava just to get food out of it. Like Murugu, for instance, they do cassava farming for selling. That is what they do; that is their commercial farming. But here it was A Rocha who came and said they wanted us to do this together. They want us to farm cassava, and they will be buying from us, and that is why there they know how to farm cassava better than us. Here we don't do cassava for selling. It was A Rocha who came and said they wanted us to go in the business with cassava farming. So that is why they see that there are some difficulties more than other places.

A: I see, and how has A Rocha responded to your difficulties or concerns?

T: They didn't discuss this with them, so there is no response between the two of them.

T: They thought that we would farm here, and at the end of the year, we would be selling for them. But A Rocha made them understand that they don't get enough from this area.

A: Okay, but then I want to understand that when you have a problem like this, what do you do? Do you tell somebody, and who do you tell?

T: They will speak to (the CIS).

A: They will talk to the CIS?

T: yes.

A: Okay. I will talk with the CIS after this discussion. More challenges?

T: There is more (the woman). What she is saying is that with A Rocha, here, our commercial business is farming and shea nut picking. And this year, there is no shea nuts. And sometimes

that is what she picks and also gets money out of it and helps her husband in the farming. And this year, there is no shea nut, and she also cannot get money to help her husband. So, let's assume that there is help from A Rocha and if they are able to farm in a large quantity and they harvest more, at the end of the year, those who are not part of A Rocha will see that A Rocha has benefit, they will see that the whole community would like to join A Rocha. But because there is no help like that people will, others will always laugh at them that A Rocha A Rocha, there is not anything out of it. So sometimes that is what makes them feel relaxed. Assume that there is help and the whole community sees that if you join A Rocha at the end of the year, you also make more harvest you will see that people would like to join A Rocha. But sometimes the help is not coming.

A: So, I want to ask here that now this year when there has not been shea. Has she or somebody in the shea project communicated to their personal people who are helping them or to A Rocha?

T: With A Rocha, they have not come yet concerning the shea butter. So, when they come, they will discuss the same with them, but this year they have not yet come.

A: So, they have not talked about it yet?

T: Yes.

A: With the shea, they have something similar to what (the CIS) is with the cassava? Do they have somebody, like a similar person who is communicating between A Rocha and...

T: Yes, they have people like that.

A: Does that person know?

T: They are aware.

A: But A Rocha has not been informed.

T: Yes.

A: Okay. More challenges?

T: What he is saying is that concerning this Fulani herdsman, sometimes you plant the cassava, sometimes one day before you go to your farm the cattle will destroy all the cassava and sometimes that is what is bordering us or disturb us a lot. So, if there is any way A Rocha can help us, that would help us a lot too. The cattle are disturbing a lot. And sometimes too you can have an agreement with A Rocha that they will buy your cassava, but sometimes after harvesting when you leave it on the farm, later when you get to the farm this cattle's will maybe consume all.

A: So, is this a new problem or an old problem?

T: That is our main challenge, not only for cassava, maize, and yam, they disturb all. Sometimes you can even go to the farm like this and the cattle and the Fulani herdsman; if you want to complain, they will chase you with the cutlers or gun. That is our main challenge here.

A: So, A Rocha knows about it?

T: We have not had a forum like this to discuss with A Rocha, but they are also aware of it.

A: So, when they have these occasional discussions about it, and they express this worry to A Rocha, what was the reaction from A Rocha?

T: They have not had a (discussion) like this.

A: But has he, for example, personally discussed with A Rocha?

T: Now they are saying that they can quite remember that some time ago they had a meeting with A Rocha in a particular room. They discussed with them concerning the cattle. Not only cattle but there are also a lot of animals disturbing them. But they have not heard anything from them.

A: How long time ago was this? Was I there?

T: You weren't there; it is almost getting to a year.

A: And nothing has happened?

T: Nothing has happened. It is almost getting to a year.

A: And A Rocha has not come back?

T: No.

T: He said he could remember you were having a discussion here; you spoke concerning these cattle too with (the ICS Manager). And (he) said that he has no right to even say it or to discuss it with A Rocha.

A: (the ICS Manager) said he has no right to discuss it with A Rocha?

T: Yes, he has no right to even discuss such a thing with them, and after that meeting, they also stopped and didn't say anything.

A: So, A Rocha communicated to you that it is a problem they cannot solve?

T: What he is saying is that he doesn't even get the chance to speak to the people because (the ICS Manager) provided him with such a thing as that. (The ICS Manager) prevent him from saying it. So, he doesn't know if A Rocha can help, or they cannot help. (The ICS Manager) didn't even give the opportunity to say it.

A: Okay, so he feels like he shouldn't even talk about it.

T: Yes, that is what (the ICS Manager) said.

A: Okay, and he doesn't know why?

T: Yes.

A: Okay. More challenges, or do you want us to do more ford?

T: We can move ford.

(This the rest of the FGD discussion was for the data collection of the internship report done by the same author)

FGD KPULUMBO

Date: 9.7.2021

Duration: 1.30

Translator: Zackaria Philip (T)

Participants: 21, 19 men, 2 women

A: Let's start!

A: Thank you for coming. Most of you should know me already because I have been working with A Rocha here with you. But today, I am not working with A Rocha; I am doing my research here with you. Because this is a special occasion and extra effort for you, I am offering you something small for participating. But I want you to understand that it is not normal because this is a special case when I am doing my research.

A: I am doing this research to identify what has gone well and what we can improve. It is not to blame anybody, just to see what we can improve. So, feel free to tell me whatever is on your mind. So, I am doing my research about communication. By communication, I mean the human interactions where we exchange information. I want to see what has been done well, and then I want to see where challenges have been and what we can improve. I want you to always think about your role as an organic farmer. **My first question is that I want you to describe a useful or good engagement with A Rocha, with the CIS, or other farmers, which has made your work as an organic farmer more successful. Which information has been transferred to you, and how has it been useful?**

T: He is explaining that before he started farming cassava at that time, they were not buying them. He was farming them, and it got to a time he stopped. Getting to five years now, he stopped. But right now, they asked some people to peel cassava, and they will come and buy it, and they did it, and they refused. But those who did it peeled them and dried them; they bought them with more than they asked.

A: So, who was asking you to do what? Did A Rocha ask you to?

T: A Rocha.

A: So, A Rocha asked you to grow cassava. So, did they ask you to peel it or not to peel it?

T: They asked them to peel it.

A: They asked them to peel it, and then they came and bought it at a good price?

T: The problem he is having is that some they didn't peel some, they just cut cut cut some. The one they cut cut, they didn't buy them well but the one they peel, they buy them with good price—the A Rocha people.

A: Okay. So, this is already coming a little bit to the challenges. So, let's come back to this a bit later. Let's first talk about the positive things, and then let's come back to the challenges a bit later.

A: But I will already make a little picture here for peeling or not peeling to remind us (the author had a big paper with her which she used to visualize things). So, when we come to the challenges, we talk more about this. But let's try to first think about the things which have been useful for you.

A: Like he was now mentioning that before, he was not selling cassava but now, he is selling cassava. Was that useful?

T: When A Rocha begins, what they gave to them was very good for them. At first, when they came, they said they shouldn't peel it; they should be cutting them. Some cut them; they didn't peel; they cut and some peel. And they came and bought those who peel and reject those who cut them. And those who cut them didn't get their cassavas back, and A Rocha people didn't buy them, so what are they going to do now?

A: They didn't get it back?

T: Yes. What we normally do is that they didn't get that cassava to eat for themselves, so the A Rocha people too didn't come and buy them. They bought those who peeled it and left those who cut them.

(The processing for the organic cassava is different from the traditional way. In the organic processing, to avoid fermenting the cassava is cut/peeled into smaller pieces than in the traditional method of processing).

A: So, in the beginning, A Rocha told you not to peel or to peel?

T: Yes, A Rocha asked them not to peel; they should be cutting them.

P: So, how did some of you know to peel?

T: The problem is that they came the first time and said that they should be cutting. Later on, they came a second time and said they shouldn't be cutting them; they should be peeling them. But at that time, some of the farmers were not here to listen to them. So those who didn't listen to them, those who were not there, they started to cut, and that brought confusion.

P: Okay, so because some of you didn't hear if you didn't know it.

T: Yes, they didn't know it.

A: I heard you. **Can we think of anything positive?**

T: So, what, when they asked them to peel them, it helped them because at first there was abundant cassava here and people were not buying. When the A Rocha people came, they should be peeling them, and they helped them too much, and now people are not even getting cassava to buy. People are buying cassava.

A: So, they could sell cassava, that is what was good.

T: He is saying that the way A Rocha people are buying now, that one is helping more than those once who are just walking around and buying because A Rocha people deal with scale. Even if cassava is like this (small amount) and they reach the scale, they are buying it. And secondly, they have a bonus given to those who are giving them the cassava, and that is helping the community.

A: Okay. So, they use a scale, and you get a bonus.

T: He is also saying that because A Rocha people asked them not to spray, they shouldn't use any fertilizer or anything, and that is giving them good health. And that is also helping the community.

T: He is also saying that A Rocha people when the people came here, you people trained them very well on how to farm cassava. And secondly, they gave motor king; the motor king is carrying the cassava and even the shea nut. That is helping them, the motor king is bringing the shea nut to the house, and that is really helping them.

A: So, for now, some knowledge was given to you about health and how to farm cassava. So, in the communication part, here I will draw a person, and the person is getting knowledge from A Rocha.

T: That truly they are getting knowledge from A Rocha. And because when you came like this, you were different from us. And it is because of A Rocha that we are seeing a white woman like this. Our fathers were not seeing white people like this. And they are greeting A Rocha; they are thanking A Rocha.

A: Okay, so you are getting exposed to different people.

T: Yea, because of A Rocha. Okay, I think that is all.

A: So, does somebody still have something in mind?

T: He is also thanking that when at first, we were not having motorbikes and stuff like that, but when you people came, you started giving motorbikes.

A: I want to come back a little bit to this giving information, to how it was done, the way it was done, was it good for you? The way they were doing the training or giving the information, was it good for you?

T: For the training side, they get understanding that, when you people came to train, they thought that when you do weeding they shouldn't burn the grasses, they should leave it. Because there is some chemical in the ground (referring to microorganisms), and it will die. So that one also is helping them the farmer.

T: And they also are saying that for every acre they should leave five or six trees for future use.

A: Is it good, is it useful for you to leave the trees, do you think that it is useful?

T: They also kept saying that at first, they spray before planting the cassava and everything, but right now, they (A Rocha) explained that when they spray and when they plant there something, when they taste something, it is not tasty like today's own. So, today's own they are not spraying, and today's own is very good for them.

A: So, it also tastes good?

T: Yea.

A: Can we talk a little about the trees because you said this is what they taught you, but I know that not everybody agrees with it. Not everybody agrees with leaving the trees.

T: You see, at first, they started, but they did not have this kind of knowledge. But when you people came now, they all agreed that they shouldn't kill the trees.

A: So now you all agree that you shouldn't kill the trees?

T: They all agree.

A: I am happy to hear; I will come and see your farms.

T: They are saying that where they are going to plant the cassava, they are not burning any tree there.

A: I am happy to hear.

T: A Rocha people said that they should be planting trees on their farms, and they are giving the trees, and they are still planting on the farm. They gave them cashews and all kinds of trees, and they are planting.

T: So, let's go to the challenges or?

A: Okay, so the challenges. So, I want you to **describe to be a challenge in the engagement with A Rocha or lack of engagement, or with the CIS or other farmers, which has made your work as an organic farmer less successful. Like an engagement with A Rocha, and practical example again, an engagement with A Rocha, or lack of it which has made their work as an organic farmer more difficult, less successful.**

T: He is saying that at first, they were spraying the place, and because they were using the spray, they could farm as big as they wanted. But now, A Rocha people came and said they shouldn't spray. So, when it is time for weeding, they don't get support, or they don't get any money so that the people can go and weed the place for them. So, because of that, they can't farm as big as they want. They always farm small, what they can take care of. They cannot farm big because they are alone; they cannot get any help. And those who didn't join A Rocha, they will spray, and they can farm big, or farm bigger cassava than those who are using their own (workforce.) Because they get to spray, so they get plenty of that. More cassava.

T: My brother is saying that the only problem they are facing is a money problem, they use the money to work, and if that time reaches and they don't have money, they can't go and weed.

T: One of the challenges he is saying is that you see some are peeling it in terms of when it comes to, some are peeling, and some are cutting it small small small, so when it gets to the scale, the ones who are cutting it small small small, they are having the weight than those who are peeling it, and they will buy it at the same price. That is also worrying him.

A: So, what is the difference in weight for those who are peeling it?

T: That the difference is that those who are cutting small small, they have weight, more weight.

A: When do you bring the same size bag?

T: Yes.

A: What about it worries you?

T: You see, those who are cutting it small small, even the sack will be like this, and it will have weight, but when you peel it, it will go high, but it will not get weight. And even those who are peeling it, when it dries, some of them are breaking, and that one has wasted the cassava. The peeling is wasting the cassava.

A: When you are peeling it, you are wasting the cassava?

T: Because when it dries, some of them break.

A: By peeling, you mean taking the peel out, or by peeling, you mean cutting it small small.

T: Peeling.

A: But when you eat it, don't you normally also peel it?

T: You see, not the first cover, the way they eat they will remove the first cover, but this they will continue to peel the cassava itself.

A: To make it small?

T: To make it small.

A: Okay, and that is the problem that sometimes it breaks, and then you waste it.

T: Aha, and then you waste it. To some, they are cutting it small small small.

A: So, you can either cut it small small, or you can peel it so that you get small pieces.

T: Some say that they will be cutting it small.

A: So, when you do it like this, it is smaller than what you would normally do for your food, it wastes more, so it takes more to fill the same bag, so that is what worries you?

T: Yes, that is what worries them.

A: Was this something which surprised you, which you didn't know before you started? Did you know this, when A Rocha came and asked you to grow cassava, did you know that you have to cut it small small?

T: That is what we discussed later, because at first when they came, they were saying that we should peel it small small, second they were saying that we should be cutting it. So those who were not part of the second meeting didn't understand, and because of that, they didn't know that they should be cutting them small small. So, they peel it. So those who cut is small small, they get it easy than those who peel it.

A: Okay, so you prefer cutting it to peeling it?

T: Yes, they prefer cutting it.

A: So basically, there is two different information's coming at different times, and not everybody got the later information.

A: More challenges? Maybe the women have some challenges, or the young farmers, do the farmers have some challenges?

T: The women too are given an idea, that the way the man can work, they cannot work like that, so they need money to do the work.

A: So, women need workers. Okay. What about the young farmers? What are your challenges?

T: For the young farmers, they need money fast fast and the way A Rocha people are buying the cassava, they are not busing it high. So young farmers need them to buy the cassava high so that they will get money fast.

A: The young farmers want fast money.

T: I think the challenge side is about money matters. The biggest challenge is about money how to work on the farm.

A: So, you have now expressed to me that you need money for labor to be able to work. But don't you have time to work on your own?

T: That is what they explained, they can work only one person can work, but the farm will not be big, they will not get a big farm, for one person cannot work big. And some of them are getting old, so they don't have enough strength to work.

A: So especially the women and the old people need labor. Is there something else in your mind that you want to tell?

T: He is saying that when you speak small and it works, it's better that you speak plenty, and it will not work. Simple word wise is enough.

A: So simple messages are better than talking a lot. So, would that mean that you don't like when a person comes just once in a while and tells you a lot of things, you would prefer that the person comes often and tells you? Do you prefer that they come often and tell little?

T: Yes.

A: Are there all things you want to tell? Or is that all of your challenges.

T: So, for today, you cannot just come and collect all the challenges.

A: No, I cannot collect all, but I want as much as I can.

T: So, you have been coming here and giving your people always the challenges. And they also complain that the Fulani people, the cattle, they are worrying them so how will you people help them with the cattle?

A: We can maybe discuss that in the end, but right now, I just want you to tell the things to be. If I would answer, it might influence your answers, so I won't answer any questions. Then when we are done maybe, we can discuss that.

T: So why is the Fulani a problem?

A: For them, they don't matter; if you plant the cassava, then they are eating them. If you even peel them, that is the worse; they will eat.

T: They will eat your cassava.

T: That is the problem.

A: So, they also eat the peeled cassava, as I understood.

T: Both, the planted one they are eating, the peeling once they are eating.

A: And when you have this problem, did you tell A Rocha about it?

T: Every time.

A: And how did A Rocha respond? Did A Rocha try to help you?

T: They didn't say anything about this.

A: They didn't do anything?

T: They didn't do.

A: So, what for are the raised platforms?

T: The raised platforms?

A: Are you not using the raised platforms?

The CIS: When you use the raised platform, the Fulani will come and drop the cassava.

T: Even this thing, when you do the platform, sometimes the Fulani man will come and destroy it, and the cattle will enter. So, there is a question, even if the peeling one you can do platforms, what about the planting once, can you to platform for the plating one too?

A: But is it not true that it is the worst for you when the peeled one is, because then your whole work is wasted if that is destroyed. So that is what we really want to protect. Of course, we want to protect all of it, but...

T: They are saying that, without this thing, the cassava sticks, without the planting, you can't get this seed.

A: That is true, so they are also missing sticks because of Fulani?

T: Yea.

A: But why I was talking about the raised platforms is because you said A Rocha tried to help you but was it not that they tried to help you with the raised platforms?

T: So, they tried to help with the platform, they tried to help.

A: Okay, so they tried to help, just that it didn't help?

T: Yeah, they couldn't help.

T: So, they also told them about the platform, this thing, the sand not to touch the cassava, they should put this thing, the platform there and put the cassava, so that even if it is ruined or the sand will not touch the cassava.

(The farmers are discussing among themselves).

A: What are they discussing?

T: They are trying to say if they get some wires to, wire-like this and they say that one will not help simply because the farmers are many, so when A Rocha people supply them three or four wires, they can't be waiting for Manon to do and give to this person and give to this person. By that time, the time is going.

A: Okay, so you were thinking of a solution, but the solution is not good.

T: Yea, the solution was not good.

A: So, let me ask you then, in your opinion, how could we solve the issue with the Fulani eating your cassava?

T: They are saying that when A Rocha came to Ghana, the government was aware. So, A Rocha should inform the government that this is what the Fulani people are doing to their cassava so that they can get some support because the government is not paying the farmer.

A: So, you think that A Rocha people should inform the government about the Fulani. Okay. One more challenge?

T: Okay, is it only cassava that A Rocha people can help them? Is there any other plant that A Rocha people can give them any other farming of different plants or crops?

A: So, you hope that A Rocha would help you with other crops.

T: Other crops, yea.

A: Which crops?

T: Any crops for their choice. For them, they can give us.

A: So, you hope A Rocha would help you with other crops. We move forward, or you still want to say something?

(This the rest of the FGD discussion was for the data collection of the internship report done by the same author)

Discussion of Results

FGD –A Rocha Ghana Northern Sector Mole Project Team

Participants:

A Rocha Ghana - Northern Sector Project Manager (PM)

A Rocha Ghana - OM4D ICS Manager nr. 1 (M1)

A Rocha Ghana - OM4D ICS Manager nr. 2 (M2)

Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute Field Supervisor (FS)

Author/intern (A)

A: To get a different perspective and also to avoid bias, I want to discuss with you what I have found so far before making my final analysis.

A: First of all, you know my thesis topic is about communication. When I have done my data collection, I have also collected a lot of information about the challenges in common in the project.

A: one of the challenges is that there is a quite long chain of communication. So, the information starts somewhere, for example, in the Agro Eco team, (MC), or (VCC). From there, it has to somehow get to A Rocha, mostly via email or phone. From there, it has to get to the CISs, also by a text message, or if you go physically to the community. And from there, it has to get to the farmers. So, there are quite many pieces in between where there can be some kind of mistake or delay happening. So that the first part where there can be a challenge in the communication.

A: So, let's mention the positive things first. So, all of the farmers are happy that they got the information that there are organic markets for cassava. They are happy that they have been brought marketed for cassava. Another thing that the farmers and CISs see as positive is that they have gotten a lot of information; they have learned a lot.

FS: Positively, I think that there are many things. They say that it's good, but still, they are not always doing it. Knowing and doing, it's not always the same.

M1: Sometimes, the information delays because of the network.

A: the CIS is often given very short notice, which is also making their life sometimes difficult.

M1: It is only some of the communities where these problems come from. For example, Kpulumbo has a very bad network. If I send information for Bawena and Kpulumbo, it takes a whole two days.

A: I think one day notice is already quite a short time.

...

M1: I think that one, it shouldn't come that way.

PM: I think the word not caring is not good. Generally, of course, it should be taken into consideration; they have schedules and plans. But it doesn't mean that we don't care.

A: maybe a wrong way to put it, but let's say that we haven't been considering it that well. Maybe because we didn't think about it, or it was difficult for us to give that notice.

PM: yea, I think more of a mixed reason. You also realize that some of them are also inconvenient to us. So, then we also have to inconvenience them. Because for example, some of them have to be done emergently. For example, last time we had meetings, I realized that, oh, this has gone so long, and this needs to be corrected immediately. Then you need to send the information, and not say, okay, we come next week for this, because we have to do it right then. So, I think it is a combination of we also having emergencies, that is also why sometimes the information gets there late. Of course, as you said, there is a communication barrier also.

PM: I know times that we had opportunities to plan ahead, for example, the internal inspection planned for the next week. We give information that the internal inspection training will be next week, you should prepare. I am not sure if we have called any CISs today that we are coming today. It is usually well-planned activity. I think if it is a well-planned activity, as it is supposed to be, then we will give notice. But what I notice is that

most of the time, we are dealing with uncertainties and emergencies, which we need to deal with fast. So, it is not really about caring; we have to find a better word to replace that.

A: it is a good point that you also sometimes forest to act in a hurry. It is sometimes because of things you don't have control of.

FS: I would say it is not about control; in that case, it is about managing yourself. In that case, which you talked about, you call (ICS manager), you say hi (ICS manager) we are coming, can you inform the others, but you didn't do it. Maybe it is not about caring, but it is being inconsiderate about other people who are involved, their plans, and their activities because you are only thinking about your own situation at the time. And in that case, that was the case. And in most of the cases with the CISs, because they are busy and because of delays in their planning, things are not getting done. You also have to reflect on the different stakeholders in the chain, whether it is the CISs, it is (ICS managers), whoever. So, I think it is about being considerate about activities which involve other people.

A: So maybe along the whole chain, there is a lack of consideration of other people's time.

FS: yea. Like last time (the VCC) was coming here, she made a plan, but she didn't inform any of us. If you are calling from Accra, the main office, this is now a long time ago, but one or two days before coming. We are here on the field where the activities are, we know what to do, and we might also know that ow, this is not necessary. So, you are only thinking about your own role, but this is s chain. I think that is inconsiderable.

A: There was a little unclear thing for me. When (the VCC) told me that she was coming, you told me that she called you, and you told her that it is not maybe the best time to come, did I understand that correctly?

FS: yea.

A: because when I talked with (the VCC), she said that she called you, and she got a positive response that she could come.

FS: No, I didn't call, (the ICS Manager)...

M1: we discussed this at the office, even before, the day when she made the call. I was at the office here, right? And we were talking that (the VCC) wanted to do this. But I was thinking that we should first consider the planting before taking care of this. So, she should rather postpone it to a particular date. So, she said that this is the plan for the year, I mean documented, so the change would also affect let also change the schedule. So that is how it happened that she came.

A: Okay, so in this case, this is also one observation which I made, that often the Agro Eco team does not consider what is the real situation is here, but rather just follow their own plan, which sometimes is, let's say, is not possible to follow concerning the real situation

M1: that is the way. The planting was supposed to end almost a month ago, but they are still planting.

PM: I generally don't think we have an issue with communication.

A: Let's put it then this way, where do you think the issue is that the annual plan is totally different from what is happening on the field?

PM: that is not about communication. Every time (the AE's Director) or (the VCC) has come here, we have communicated clearly what is possible. If we cannot do this at this time, we tell them that this is not possible. So, it is not as it has not been communicated. It is more of coming to a common understanding. In an ideal situation, normally, it is communicated from

between (AE's Director) because he thinks the planting should have been done in January-February, which is an ideal situation. If you plant in January-February, March, October, you have your cassava ready. It is the ideal situation. But many times, over and over, we have communicated clearly that this is not possible because of A, B, C.

A: maybe I should have clarified in the beginning how I define communication. For me, part of the communication is also coming to an understanding or coming to disagreement.

PM: that is why we have always been flexible in this because there is an ideal thing. We communicated let's do this at this time. It doesn't work; let's communicate this back. So, let's move it a week, like (the VCC) says, everybody plants by next week. And (the FS) is okay, and then they come again, and now it is extended until Tuesday. And then everybody is like, let's extend it until July. And now July is ending, and it is the final deadline. It is also that bit of communication. I don't think it is an issue that we don't understand. If the OM4D team were here, they would have the same thing of adjusting always. And also, if I am in Accra, I can also write an email and say hi, I want planting done by June.

A: Yea, one example of this is these really early planting times, like let's plant in February when the rains have not even started yet. The farmers know that it does not work.

PM: yes.

A: so, there is a kind of lack of communication, or lack of understanding that why this information does not reach them, or why do they not understand that it is simply not possible, or it does not make sense.

FS: I think, I look it kind of from (the AE's Director's) perspective, it is kind of he tells (the VCC), this has to be done at this time. And (the VCC) thinks oh this is not possible and then tells it to (the ICS Manager). And (the ICS manager) is here in the field, or A Rocha is in the field and knows that this is practically impossible, and it is communicated back, and (the VCC) informs the director again, and he is still stubborn that no, this is proven, this is possible because the soil is moist. Because there already comes the problem, because you have seen it.

FS: You know, different communities are different in their soil, and based on that, you have to consider can it be done at this point of the year. Even in December, you can plant, Yakub Mahamma planted, and his cassava is doing well. So compared to Seidu Takora, it is different. I mean, look at Bawena Mr. Noah he planted in March, and his cassava did not do well.

FS: We went there with (the VCC) and (AE's director), and (the VCC) sees that, and when she goes back to Accra, she is still continuously telling us that they should be planting in February. I think that is madness. So, it still goes back to people being inconsiderable about the practical situation.

FS: This is the plan; they follow the plan, even if it is unrealistic. The plan is the guide, but it doesn't mean that we have to stick in the plan. So, I think that there is a mismatch in the flow of information. Like (the AE's director) is not in Ghana. And when you look at it, they think like A Rocha is lazy, or they are not doing their things in time, but in that case, I just think (the VCC) or (AE's director) is not being realistic in asking the farmers to plant in February.

FS: I think (AE's director) has confessed that the communication between A Rocha from A Rocha to him is not that good. So, I don't know the depth of how bad it is, but in this situation, communication has not been good. They are not considering each other, everybody

is doing their own thinking, and there is not much discussion about it, no debating. They didn't agree to disagree on it, and I think that is the problem.

FS: I would tell other examples of the communication between here and Agro Eco. Two times (the VCC) has come here, so on the first time she communicated before, she had made her plan, but she sent her plan late. And when that happened, (the ICS Manager) also didn't call the farmers and tell them. So, I think that was a problem why some things weren't in time. That was also up to (the VCC) that she didn't inform us early. Like ow, you are coming, which communities are you going to, nobody knows. You can tell (the ICS manager) that you are coming, but how is (the ICS Manager) going to inform the farmers if he does not know which communities we are going to. So, I think before you come, one or two weeks before you send your plans, discuss them with the parties you are going to be involved with. If it is just one or two days before, I have to say that no, we need to discuss these things before so I can say what is possible and what is not possible. Because of the internet, I would say again being inconsiderable. That is how I see it. She was late in preparation and late in communication. So that was, of course, trouble. If you have time for preparation, it is different.

FS: And also with the contract communication gap, no communication also in Accra not responding. I don't know the reason for that, but that was also inefficient communication between the two partners. I don't know the depth of it, but it is not a good way of communicating and respecting each other. That is basically what I know.

M1: considering the communication barrier, I think that is kind of the problem like a challenge the issue about the delays about planting, it is a way of piloting, trying out how it grows. It was only when we went to Bawena there were some farmers, and we asked him when he did his planting, and he told us that he did it in December, with his yam. So, they planted the cassava while they were planting the yam, and it did well. So, they kind of said that we should try it again. So, it is something that was also to try, but then it became like we should do it, which doesn't work well. Looking at it, if there is no rain, you can't do it even somewhere in March.

...

A: the farmers and the CIS have trouble communicating about their challenges, or they delay talking about them.

FS: The CISs have problems expressing themselves in case of negative information if you call them. Or also, within the communities, sometimes the farmers are a bit of a challenge. In Gurubago, we thought they had planting sticks. Some people have planting sticks, but they don't want to give them to the other farmers. And then we can see also happening in other communities. The planting stick business narcissist. There are sticks in the communities. As I have said, that is true. I don't know if it is known to them.

PM: I don't think it is an issue with the CISs. I think it is a general thing in the communities. I think it is more cultural than being afraid. Because we have very good discussions with them, we play with them, and when we sleep in the communities, we sleep at their places. So, I don't think it is a very official boss or something which makes them afraid. It is more of a cultural thing. I think it is more of what they are like. They want to see how we can deal with it. Or they are not really doing anything about it, but they are just hoping that the situation will get better. So, they just want to keep quiet about it. Or sometimes they don't really have a solution about it, so they don't want to tell. Because if they call and you say, this is the problem, so what do you think about it? So, if you already don't have a solution you don't

call. So, it's more of a cultural thing. More than the kind of relationship which is between them and us.

FS: maybe it comes to the farmers not really understanding that the failure of one is the failure of the whole thing. That is not the message which has been given to them. For example, the good farmers think that if I give them sticks, they are not serious. If you don't have sticks, you are not a serious farmer. Why have you not come to see us get it? I think that will be the message that this is a collective process. Even if you can help each other with the knowledge, go and help. It is also a communal relationship.

PM: that communal thing which you mean is in the program. You do for me, and I will do it for you. The communities will have to understand that this is something that, if you benefit, will help the whole community. But in this particular instance, when they feel something which could give economic benefit if you give them without getting anything directly in return, they are kind of very reluctant. Others say if we are going to weed, we all weed, and then you are also coming to my place to weed, so then I get the benefit from spending my time with you. But how it is now, the whole community sense has gone down. It is really decreased. I mean the ICS manager is somebody who comes from this area, he can tell you. The whole communal sense has decreased.

FS: politics.

PM: yes, also politics, it has really decreased. So now nobody is willing to do anything for anybody else unless there is a return. So, I think it so about, yes, the message, and we can still push them the message, that hey, you can get money from your cassava sticks, but sometimes you need to do this for the whole community to have a good product and also for farmers. And those farmers who don't have, it will come to a time that you will need those sticks again because we can't keep giving the sticks for free. That we have told you guys how to preserve your sticks for the next year, and we expect you to do it next year when we harvest. We will bring all the sticks to Mognori and keep them there. When it is time, we will distribute them again.

FS: take care that they are next to the river or something

PM: exactly

FS: and from time to time, you guys go.

PM: yes, we have to do that, because spending 100 cedis 200 cedis. Planting sticks, it is almost a thousand that we are spending on.

FS: there are farmers who are asking for more.

M2: Because Kpulumbo they feel that they have this cattle issue worse than Bawena, so why is it that they have to provide the sticks for free. So, by the time we were there, you see that all of them relaxed until the money game out. That is why they are there now to sell the sticks.

A: Sometimes, I feel also that they don't tell the real reasons, like with the planting sticks, why did they say they didn't have planting sticks when it was about the money. Why did they not say that they wanted money?

PM: I think it is cultural. We had issues with people living in Damango, service providers whom we had agreed on things with them so that when we have an issue, they can

communicate, and it is like ou, we had this problem. So, it is more of the culture. I wouldn't say it in Africa because I don't know.

FS: it is Africa (laughing)

PM: I can say that here, for example, it is more of a cultural thing.

FS: I think in the Gambia, Senegal, you can see the same thing.

M2: The others often say that they don't even have cassava sticks. So, I was asking, and in the end, do you sell or not, and then they came out to sell.

A: Another challenge is that when a problem is observed, it takes quite a long time to react.

PM: well, I think that the reaction time to the problems depends on the problem. There are some problems that are even beyond me or the office level. Those ones are internal issues. But even their budget consequences go beyond me. So, some of the decisions that we can take quickly I have to answer to them. And on the blindside, I always tell my colleagues that some questions are always hard to defend because they don't get what is happening. You need to spend in a particular way. That is an example, motor prepares for an instant for the CISs. Clearly, there is an activity for motorbike prepares I have seen a new request for Gurubago and Wawato, the one which you (FS) gave to (the ICS Manager). And those ones alone are getting close to 500-cedi 600 cedi. So, some of them you cannot react quickly, some of them you need to go back and discuss, some of them, you need approval. There are things that I have asked for approval for weeks, and I have not gotten approval. So, I think it depends on the problem as I said.

PM: Yes, those which are within our domain, we take the blame for it. Maybe we didn't see too much emergency in that; we take the blame. But those that go beyond us, we cannot answer; we need approval, we need approval for so many things. As for now, the manager was calling me, and he was asking why did you do A B C without approval? I have to defend that. So sometimes, it also goes beyond us. As I said, we take the blame for those once we were supposed to, and we could have reacted.

PM: The Fulani issue is bigger than Kpulumbo or Bawena; we are engaging on a bigger level. Because we think that even then, communities can take action, which they are not taking. We can solve it at a bigger level. The chief directs every Fulani. Not to send the cattle there, it would be solved, only one person giving a command. If the chief wants the Fulani to leave the landscape, it will be done. So, I think we are also tackling it from that angle. I realize that when we try to talk to the communities and empower them with these issues, they are still scared of the chief because the chief is the one who has the Fulani to go to the community. Even though I find it very weird, that is the truth. Sometimes you talk to them, and they say they have issues, and they ask them to pay. Yesterday someone in Bawena had an issue with the cattle; he shot the cattle down, and he was asked to pay. I am even thinking of giving that money back to the man. So, if the chief is not cooperating, there is no way for the communities to move along.

FS: as part of my thesis, I spoke about land use. I was looking at it, and it is a landscape problem. (The Agro Eco director) asked me to work on a strategy, and these days, I did research about the Fulani, and I thought if, as part of this project, we could organize a stakeholder meeting to move this whole landscape problem

PM: we had all these meetings. So currently, we are looking at another time to what we can do now is that we should concentrate on the communities which are highly affected, like for

example Kpulumbo. All of them with their chief. Do they have a cattle problem also in Wawato and Gurubago?

FS: yea. But I think they are looking at it.

PM: you see, all of these communities are under one chief. So, it is one man who is playing hard. But it is difficult because it is these Fulani who is providing gifts to the chief, but the communities are not. So, the communities are poor. So, it is the Fulani who are making the chiefs rich. So, they can also not go behind them. We are planning to deal with the Fulani in the communities individually. I think the best way is to plan now where the Fulani can graze and where to farm.

FS: that is also part of the research because they are grazing randomly.

FS: because what I see is that the Fulani problem is not addressed. People don't want to join because they are afraid of Fulani.

PM: yea, I think the best way to look at it is from the community angle. While if you guys have enough money, we can do it, because it is expensive.

A: I go a little back to the organizational structures, which delayed things. Then is the CIS, who have a feeling that A Rocha doesn't care, because they are not responding to their problems.

M1: with that issue with the motorbikes, where we provided the motorbikes to other two communities, and other two were not provided and how it is possible that the other two communities were assisted. It was the Murugu community where this problem came up, and they were saying that we cannot neglect them when the other two communities are getting the motorbikes. But at the end of the day, what we were doing is that we considered certain resources and also some kind of travel times. So, all of those things were part of the considerations which we did. And also, when you look at Murugu, for example, at the time, they had enough farms, but shorter distances compared to Bawena and the other communities.

A: do the CIS understand this, because when I talked with them, they were saying that they don't understand why they were not provided the motorbikes

PM: it is a common thing which would be said. I'm not surprised that it keeps on coming. I think it is a human tendency. I mean, I see it in here, I am in this office, and if I go to Accra, I'm like, hey, why do you give this office, but you didn't give me this office like I think I also deserve this. We explain to them that because our budget form last year only provided for two motorbikes, because of A B C D we gave to Kpulumbo and Bawena. And also, to motivate them, because Murugu is quite motivated, but Bawena we needed to quite push some things.

PM: Also, the investment which we were doing in Murugu was even more. In Murugu, we invested a lot in other projects. So, try to create a balance. Wasn't I yesterday asking for the price of the motorbike so that we can also order it for the new communities? We will buy it for everybody. It is a human tendency, they don't see it, but we had explained it to them when we handed out the motorbikes. Those ones I am not really surprised; I'm sure it happens to all of us when we think that we need something and we don't get it, even after the explanation you think that.

FS: they still want more

PM: yea. Could you imagine the tricycle, which is for the project, so Murugu thinks that we should still give them the tricycle and for reasons that I will shortly mention to you? Murugu

alone, like last year and this year, have had four tricycles. So how will I now assign you another tricycle? It doesn't work like that. But from their perspective, they think that this is for cassava, so give cassava one.

FS: I think it is based on the fact that they have been told that they will get it.

M1: who said that

PM: no, nobody told that.

A: but even if it has not been said, I am curious to know how did you discuss this with them.

PM: as (the ICS manager) said they had a discussion.

A: but this was how long time?

PM: we cannot discuss the motorbike every time we meet.

A: no, but how long time ago was this discussion was?

PM: a year. When we were distributing the motorbikes, we had issues. We had to decide what to do.

FS: for instance, when you planned, did you factor in all of those things. Like was it you (AE's director), A Rocha, Agro Eco. Because if your intention is to have a thousand farmers, and the CIS needs to visit these farmers, and you don't, did you consider mobility in that project?

PM: this mobility was considered, that is why I told you we had a budget for a motorbike last year. And the budget for the project yearly, as (the AE's Director) would tell, these things are financed through the project. And you need money for many things, so you start gradually. And the budget we put at the buildings which got in Bawena and Murugu. We were supposed to have one in Kpulumbo, but the money was not enough, and we didn't want to do anything which was below a particular standard. So, we have to think, okay, looking at where the numbers are, so Murugu is closer to Bawena, so if we have to process, we can move them to Murugu. So, we can have two in the meantime and then move on. And that is project management because you don't have infinite amounts of money. But you have budgeted for the time when you have entered the project, things would have pushed up, and this can be pushed up about 50-70 percent of your original budget. And that one, there is nothing you can do about it. So, we have that challenge. They sent me the price list, and the price was supposed to be for each community. But then I realized that when it was time to buy the money was not enough. So, I said, okay, let's buy one, then we move on to buy. So, for the motorbikes, we buy two, and then another year we buy two more, or if we can buy all, okay we buy them all. We are building. I think it's a challenge. If I had money, why not. You see (the assisting ICS manager); she doesn't have a motor. We have to share. And that is how it is. It is difficult because resources are constrained. It is not that everybody is not trying to put in their best. The CISs are trying their best, and the farmers are doing their best. So sometimes we think that if they are more open, we are also more open so we can meet somewhere.

FS: I would say if there will be a second face, what would you advise? Because if you look at the Agro Eco's director's email, next year it is going to be 5000 farmers.

PM: 5000? 5000 where? Where will the farmers come from?

FS: I think we will still move around the landscape.

PM: Okay, you mean more communities. Of course, it just means that we have to divide 5000 by 200 or 300 we have now times the money, so that is the budget we should have.

FS: What would you too as you are the manager?

A: has (AE's Director) asked you about this?

PM: we have not discussed this; I don't have any information about 5000 farmers.

A: So, this is new information?

PM: oh wow, yes.

FS: so those are, for example, instances about communication. Because it is a really common problem because that is also why I am pushing it because I can see that they are not very motivated to do things, internal inspections

...

PM: Okay, let me ask you a question; in Bawena and Kpulumbo, are they not motivated?

FS: yes, I think in Kpulumbo they are really motivated this year,

PM: I always put these things into a context for us to understand them very well. I think they need the bicycle as well, but I generally think because of the motivation, I don't think it is 100 presents because of the bike. I don't think they are demotivated because of that. Last year they didn't have a motorbike as well, and they got more farmers than anybody else.

A: In there is kind of a feeling that A Rocha doesn't care about them, kind of lack of empathy which they are not receiving.

PM: maybe, yes, maybe that.

FS: I think they are motivated. I think they speak more to us because we are outsiders and more open to us and talk about their problems.

PM: Okay, let me talk about this; you are learning about some of these things, community engagements. Everybody feels more open to talking to strangers than to people who know what they know. Let me tell you an example if I go to Murugu now with the long years of engagement of what has happened, there are some things which they tell me, I will tell it's not true, or that you can do this way, or you can do this way. So, they will not tell me. For you, you are new, ou, A Rocha doesn't care, A Rocha doesn't care, but I am sitting here every day thinking about them, so don't tell me I don't care. Not because of me but because they know the discussions, we had they know what we are doing, they know the kind of way, so they cannot say that. If you have a problem, you cannot say that because A Rocha doesn't care.

A: can maybe the ICS managers also tell their opinions?

PM: I just want to say that it is okay; it is good that we get the feedback from you. But this, when the strangers go to the communities, this is the time when they come out with things like this, and this is normal, and I like it sometimes, so they talk about things they know we are too well placed to buy-in. Because sometimes they just want you to sympathize with them. And sometimes you do that, and they need to give you more than they are giving. So, they always tell you trust.

A: Okay, let me tell one example; I think you are correct in big parts, but not all. For example, one of the CIS had not even told A Rocha that his motorbike was broken until I think I and (the FS) were there. I was asking why, and the reason was that they didn't think A Rocha would do anything about it. And this is something that I think if they had told it, you

would have tried to do something about it, but just that they had this feeling that A Rocha doesn't care.

M1: as when I went there with (the VCC) to tell them this is the reason why we are giving the motor to other communities, but you are not given, but then what we come to in terms, whichever motorbike you will use, let's say if you are visiting their farms on the site, they are using motorbikes, and we don't expect that they should walk to the farms if they have motorbikes which have problems. So whatever motorbike you get, and it has a problem, you can bring it on, and what we will do, we buy them fuel even if you don't have a motorbike for it. The CIS should tell us immediately that we have motorbikes, but we were not bold enough to come to the office.

A: this is the observation that they feel that they would be rejected.

PM: have they been rejected before?

A: I don't know. I am just informing you about the observation

PM: we all are more open to our uncles than were to our daddies, but fathers are the supervisors, but we would prefer the aunties and uncles because we know they sympathize with us. I perfectly understand that. But it doesn't come from the point of care, that one I would argue that we wouldn't care about them, because there is no single organization which has invested in this communities as we have.

A: and this is one thing they know.

PM: time resources every time we are thinking about them. Maybe it is that we are handicapped, and that is what makes it look like that.

A: basically, what I was thinking from the fact that the reaction time is so slow.

PM: I don't know why maybe they have asked (the ICS Manager), and he didn't tell me; I don't know.

A: let's say the mill tools; they have been asking for the tools since March.

PM: which tools?

M1: the tools for the mill.

FS: I think she is right. It is a bit problematic that sometimes things take too long before they are done. Maybe that is why there is this tendency not to talk about it because they see you as their bosses.

PM: No...

FS: maybe that's not the right word, but they see you bigger than them, we are like hi guys come to me, we are your colleagues

PM: (The ICS Manager) comes from the communities, and you think they think of him as their boss?

FS: they see you as A Rocha.

M2: you know, some of them still ask me why I still don't have my own bike. They believe that the money is there, so they ask why they haven't gotten you a bike? But I say we don't have money right now; they don't believe.

A: let me also tell you one example; there is one farmer who felt that (the ICS Manager) forbid him from talking about the Fulani problem. That was he felt about it.

PM: which community was it?

A: I think it was Bawena

PM: that (the ICS Manager) forbid him?

A: he had a feeling that he tried to talk about it, but (the ICS Manager) was saying something like it is not an issue which is his right to solve; I don't remember exactly. Nevertheless, how he felt it was that (the ICS Manager) stopped him from talking about this.

M1: there was the issue when the farmer killed the cow; I visited the farms and how the cattle are infusing all of them. I don't see a farmer that I don't share, or they don't share with me their pain, no.

PM: I have done that before and for good reasons. I wouldn't think it so surprising; after dealing with communities, sometimes you feel that some of the things that they tell you are things that they can handle themselves, or it is something that they are trying to find an excuse for. You may see that it is something that we should listen to.

A: I am trying to stay neutral and just tell that this is my observation and what do you think about it.

PM: in Kpulumbo, we were talking about something, which was also something that I am not interested in this; I want to solve the main issue while I am here.

M2: the only time I remember talking about anybody's cow problem was when they came out and tried to report. And I was saying that they could solve this as a community because we are the farmers, so if elders are worried about the farmers, communicate with the chief.

PM: I think coming back to the question, it is a feeling, but I don't think it is a feeling with the right guidance if you spread it openly. They cannot say that any other organization or person cares more than we do. For that one in conversations, they wouldn't be to be said like that. Some instances, like if they feel like they need a motorbike, yes, I agree, but I wouldn't agree when there has to be a generalized one that they feel that A Rocha...

A: no, no, this is just a few farmers who had this feeling.

A: There is a feeling from the Agro Eco side, and I also sometimes personally felt that way, and I came to personally talk about it with you; that sometimes it feels like that you as a manager are either not communicating or you don't know what is going on at the field.

PM: communicating with whom?

A: communicating with me, Agro Eco, or with (the FS).

PM: ou, they are two different communications. My communication with Agro Eco is a down-up communication; my communication with you is like communicating with (the ICS Managers). So, which one are you talking about because they are two different communication lines?

PM: But anyway, let's start with the fact I have a chain of communication. There are so many things that I can't communicate directly to Agro Eco so that one shouldn't be expected to go that way, and it is a normal thing. If (the ICS Manager) is even communicating with (the VCC), there are some things he cannot communicate it has to come through me. And that is the same way. And it is not only with the Agro Eco-project; it is the general thing with us. So, I have an immediate boss I communicate with who communicates to (the AE's Director). Of course, there are general day-to-day things I can communicate, like if you have issues with

something like planting, you can give a general update on how planting is going, those once yes. But when it comes to formal communication and communicating, maybe, quantitatively or monetarily, it has to go through Accra; it has to go through A Rocha office. It's not a challenge. It is from there; however, it gets to (the AE's Director) how to deal with it.

A: since we are on the line of communication, we can also discuss the, let's say, the buying and processing, so the MC was expecting, or the information was given to her that there will be 60 tons of cassava, something happened in between, and somehow, at this point when this was communicated to her, was there a mistake in that information communicated from here to her?

PM: During the inspection, or during the projections, since last year was our first year, we should know that our projections will be wrong, but we still make the projection, based on the number of farmers, based on the size of the farms, so that was the projections, so it was not wrong information which was sent to her. The predictions could have been right; if we had everything moving smoothly, the projection itself could have been right. I think the other challenges with the buying, and all that stuff, I think that is what made us not meet the projections.

...

A: So, the processing, in February (the MC) got the information that there is demand for peeled cassava

M1: the information was passed to the farmers, so it was really the last week of the drying season when we came back to them; they should peel.

A: When was the drying season? So, in February, (the MC) got to know that they should peel, so when was the information provided to you, and what were the farmers doing at the time?

M1: I say it was somewhere in December

PM: When did we buy, in March?

FS: in January

PM: so, it was in March, so the information about peel was when we did this thing with the farmers, with the brushes and did a video, so the communication was given to the farmers, and later the communication came that they want to be peeled

A: so, they already started the processing when the information came that they wanted to be peeled?

PM: yea

A: so, the information was just provided too late?

M1: too late.

FS: What I remember was when we came here, I came here first together with (the MC) in January. The message was unpeeled. I was there first-hand at the farms.

A: so, in February, you got the information that it should be peeled, and in early March, you started buying?

PM: so, it was still unpeeled

FS: I know when we did the test when the first sample was sent to Biofach with (the MC), and there was sand.

PM: so, the communication came late

A: so then I want to add to that when I was talking with the farmers in Bawena, what they were complaining about was that first they were told to cut the cassava, and later, they were told to peel it so slice it and that the second time when they were told to slice it, not all of the farmers were there, so they didn't know about it. Why was there this change?

M2: due to the fermentation. (The MC) said that what we use the cassava for is not good to ferment it, so we need to slice it.

A: so that information you also got just after February?

PM: yes, it was after Biofach.

A: so that was also provided pretty late?

(The MC told later that the information was sent even before Biofach).

PM: I think the buying of the cassava peeled, unpeeled, sliced whatever was because we were still testing, we didn't have a buyer. So, if anybody came and said, oh, I wish I get a sample of this, we would. So, I think we were testing, so I also wouldn't blame (the MC) too much. She was bossed around the possibility of the market, and we were also trying to respond to the market. So, it's a lot, and I hope we use this year to learn, so when we communicate to the farmers, we know what to communicate.

A: I want to talk about the pricing, but that is a question I have; I think you only went to Bawena and showed them a sack and told them that this is how much we pay for this. Is it true that it is only Bawena where you went?

M1: we have a reference from last year what we bought. Last year we bought with a scale we weight and the 100kg we had a price for it, so we told them the same, we happened to buy the 100kg, and we will give them this amount of money. So, the people coming to Bawena they were a little bit confused; I don't know; I think it was also the communication from the CIS to the farmers. We gave up the number five sack (50kg) for them to bring it home. But they wouldn't like to sell it if we want to buy it with this amount of money, with this price. And today we have a different kind of sack, they won't sell it. But left on us it is just a communication barrier within the community, and it never came down to Kpulumbo and Murugu.

A: So, it is just in Bawena?

M1: in other communities, we don't have that kind of problem.

M2: I think last time when we went to the communities to sign the contract with the communities, I think this thing came. And we asked them who gave them that information that the 50kg would be going for 80 cedis. And they said that they heard that they would be buying a bag for 80 cedis so when they saw that they were bringing the 50kg in they thought that that is what they were going to use. So, they didn't really hear it from anybody; they just assumed.

A: so, there was a confusing situation for the farmers, which A Rocha didn't consider.

PM: even with the normal bags, sometimes they get confused because we weigh.

A: so, the pricing, the market price raised. But the farmers feel unhappy because they feel that the organic price should be higher than the conventional one.

M1: as a result of the previous year that people were good to buy almost everything that they have and also the cassava. And this times people came to buy the remaining. And whoever, if

you have a bag, you can sell it at the price as you feel like doing. And that increased the price we are talking about right now. We bought almost all the conventional cassava and moved it out. People were even looking for cassava to buy, but they were not getting it. So whatever cassava you have, you sell it at the price you want, and it increases the price. So today, they should at least applaud the A Rocha people

M2: they should be grateful

M1: grateful for that

PM: these are market dynamics, and the whole idea of organic is to provide some of the premiums. The fact is that there is no way that can be promised that, even for shea that we will buy at the market price. No matter what, the market prices are always higher. Because of these challenges, because there is no commodity now, like for shea and some buy it with 200 cedis. So, I don't think it surprises that people view that we bought it below the market price. But that is what organic premium is for; organic premium or market gives you a stable, reliable, sustainable source.

A: why were they told that it would be bought at a better price instead of telling them that?

PM: because by the time we were doing the organic cassava, a bag was 30 cedis.

A: yea, but when you look at the contract which we signed this year with them, it says that A Rocha will buy it with 10 percent more than the market price.

PM: Okay, then we have to look at the contract.

FS: (ICS Manager), take note that we have to change the contract.

PM: When we did the analysis, 30 cedis was the price, and people were not buying. That is why we had to buy conventional at 60 cedis. We have to buy so we know the price is regulated. As it is, maybe, we caused it, but then we are happy at least there is competitiveness in the pricing. Like last year, this year we were supposed to buy it lower than we bought it, but because cassava was expensive, people were buying it like 200, 300 cedis. We have to now talk to, I think we talked to (the VCC) and (MC) and said we couldn't buy the cassava at the 80 cedis which when (the AE's Director) came we agreed on. Nobody would sell it to us. So why won't we do it together 150 cedis, 120 cedis and we give them the bonus which is 30 cedis? And these are all market dynamics, and that is why I said these are all difficult to inform how much we will buy with the next season because we would be shooting ourselves in the foot. This project relies on how much we do well. So, if we buy with 200 cedis and we take it to the markets, and they are selling it with 5 dollars, then it means we are also making losses. So, we would compare.

PM: Ah, there was something I wanted to talk about with (the MC), pricing if I even realized that some of the European buyers the local ones would sell it. But no, it means that we will run at a loss if we sell, and we wouldn't get the markets we are looking for because we are looking for buyers interested in paying for the organic premiums. Cassava would be paying directly for the organic premiums and the conservation premiums. But if we get a buyer to buy it at the normal price, it is not sustainable. So, (the MC), we have to discuss this on several occasions. So, with the markets, you just have to dialogue with the communities; we are doing our best to keep the prices at a very good level. And then see what we can do beyond. But to promise them, to put it in the contract.

A: yes, that is what I mean why they weren't happy because it is in the contract and communicated to them.

PM: yea, we have to change that in the contract.

A: not only in the contract, but you also have to communicate to them that we are offering them stability.

PM: you know the communities if we tell them that ow, we cannot offer you a higher price, but we will offer you stability, nobody will grow cassava.

A: maybe, but then it is their choice.

PM: If I tell them that I cannot offer higher prices, but I offer you stability, nobody will come.

A: so, you would not want to tell it?

PM: I think I want to tell

FS: competitive price

PM: yea

FS: we should say that we can offer you a competitive price and we can offer you some stability. They are very conscious about financial matters, so those things need to be planned well.

M2: and last time, because of the pricing, some of them intentionally refused to harvest

FS: yea

PM: I think it is the same thing for the shea; sometimes the people come and say that the committee, I combine it culturally. If I told the price how we started buying shea, you would cry. The same thing for the cassava because you are now providing stability and providing the stability you want to use the issue. If in one year some committee refuses to sell because they expect you to buy with 150, prices which people come to buy from Damango. So, you would explain and talk and talk. So that year, we said no, okay, we don't go by in Kpulumbo, we bought in the other communities and moved on. Because communities don't also sometimes want to sympathize with what we are doing, you give them the assurance they will use those things against you. I am not surprised that they don't want us to buy the cassava at the same price as we bought it in March, but the European price will maybe not change. So, we need to engage them a lot.

A: That was also decently something mentioned by A Rocha and Agro Eco that the farmers have a lack of commitment to the project.

FGD: CISs

Date:

30.7.2021

Participants:

CIS Gurubagu (Gu)

CIS Bawena (Ba1)

CIS Bawena (Ba2)

CIS Kpulumbo (Kp1)

CIS Kpulumbo (Kp2)

CIS Murugu (Mu1)

CIS Murugu (Mu2)

Author/intern (A)

A: Let's start about the positive things: markets for cassava, you have learned a lot, for example, about the negative effects of chemicals, cassava farming, crop rotation, intercropping. In most of the cases, farmers learned well the do's and don'ts, but a deeper understanding was often missing. Also, the farmers are sometimes doing things that they are not supposed to do. Farmers also mentioned the tricycles and mills. Agro Eco and A Rocha said they are happy for the CIS's commitment and the knowledge the CIS has about the communities. Do you agree with my observations?

CISs: we agree.

A: Okay. My observation about the challenges is that there is a very long chain of communication, and that also makes it slow, or sometimes information is lost or misunderstood. So, one thing this is causing, as you mentioned, is that sometimes you get very short notice before they visit the communities. I believe it is because of this long chain of communication, or sometimes it is because of a lack of planning. It is also the type of work; there always comes up these emergencies.

Ba1: It is a big challenge

A: Do you agree? Is it not a challenge in Kpulumbo?

Kp1: It's a challenge.

A: It is a challenge in Murugu?

Mu1: Yes. All you have said, it is okay.

A: Sometimes it happens that A Rocha has informed you that they will come, but then they will not come late or not at all. There is the network problem, which is also related to this. Often A Rocha gets surprises, and they might try to contact you, but there is no network.

Mu1: That one is not only A Rocha. One day I was called by (the VCC), and she said that we go to Kpulumbo so because of that we didn't go to our farms. We just waited until around four they came back from Kpulumbo. We said that we were waiting for them.

A: So also Agro Eco?

Mu1: aha.

A: This is also a little bit of a mystery about what happened. From you, I understood, or was it that (the ICS Manager) called you? What did (the ICS Manager) tell you? Was he telling you that they will go to Bawena or that

Mu1: That they will come to Murugu before they go to Kpulumbo for the training.

A: But were they telling you that they would pick you up?

Mu1 & Mu2: yes.

A: Okay, I haven't asked (the ICS Manager) yet, but (the VCC) thinks that you had not been told.

Mu1: (the ICS Manager) gave the information.

A: Okay. (the VCC) did not know that they were supposed to pick you up. Or at least that is what she wrote to the report. So sometimes, there has been a miscommunication. Or because of the network, they cannot inform you, or you cannot inform them. Or sometimes when they want to visit you, you have made other plans. Sometimes you also cannot inform A Rocha. But sometimes, you don't inform A Rocha even if you have a network if you are not available. Then they come there, and you are not there. Is this true?

Mu1: No. Anytime that they come, we will be there.

A: So, if you are not available, you will tell them?

Mu1: Only sometimes they will say that they came, but they won't come.

A: I know that it sometimes happens this way around, but I also know it sometimes happens the other way around. And some people in this room also know that it sometimes happens.

Mu2: Anytime they come, we are always available.

P: So, you always cancel your own plans?

CIS together: yes

Mu1: Sometimes they say they will come, but they will not come.

A: why is it that if you have your own plans, why don't you inform A Rocha that, hey, I am not available?

Kp1: Sometimes, it is the network.

A: Sometimes, it is the network, but I know it is not only because of the network.

Mu1: we don't want to say it because we are the CIS. Sometimes if they are coming to the community and we say we are not available.

CIS (?): they will comply.

Mu1: Ahaa.

A: So, you think that if you said you are not available, they would be angry at you?

Ba1: They will think you are not serious.

A: They will think you are not serious about the work. Okay. But it does still happen. From my understanding, based on the discussion I had, I think it is also cultural for you to have this difficulty discussing this kind of thing. Do you think it is true?

Mu1: No.

A: Okay, you don't think so. Bawena CIS, what do you think?

Ba1: No, it's not.

A: You don't think it is difficult. But I know that there was a situation like this with you.

Ba1: Me?

A: Yea, when (the FS) and I were coming, you were in Damango, so it was not because of the network you didn't inform us. Why was it difficult for you to call us and tell us that you are not in Bawena?

Ba1: Sometimes, it is because we don't have any credit.

A: But you can just give us a miscall, and we will call back to you.

Ba1: It is not enough.

A: So, you did not have any credit?

Ba1: hmm.

A: Is that true?

Ba1: hmm.

Mu1: Sometimes, we are poor. Sometimes we don't have any money even for.

Ba1: Sometimes, we don't even have enough to flash you.

A: Really? That is the reason?

Ba1: hmm. No credit.

A: CIS Kpulumbo?

Kp1: It's true.

A: I know it is not always like that. We don't need to discuss it now if you are shy. But I know it is not always like that. We already talked about it. I am not here to judge you or to get you into trouble. I just want to understand why you are doing what you are doing, so maybe we can also try to solve this. But I cannot force you, so if you feel uncomfortable and don't want to talk about it, that is fine.

Gu: What are they talking about?

(He came late to the meeting)

A: We are talking about a situation where A Rocha has told you that they are coming, but the CIS is not available, and the CIS has not informed whoever is coming that that is not available.

A: One challenge which has been expressed is that if you want to meet all of the farmers, it is difficult unless it is Friday because the farmers don't go to their farms on Friday.

CIS together: yes.

A: Some people were telling me that sometimes you have passed some information to the CIS, but the CIS, for a reason or another, has not been able to pass it on maybe to the fellow CIS or to the farmers. So, the information has not moved from the CIS where it was supposed to go. Do you admit this has happened to you?

Gu: No.

Mu2: No.

A: Has this happened to you, Kpulumbo CIS?

Kp1: No.

A: Look, I won't benefit much from this discussion if you are not honest with me. I know this has happened, and I simply want to know why? Where was the challenge? What was the challenge that you could not pass the information?

Gu: Sometimes, as my brother has said, the challenge is the network.

A: But when you have to pass the information to the farmers, you don't use the network.

Gu: Oh, pass the information to the farmers.

A: I know personally some people in this room it has happened to. So, I know you are not all telling the truth when you say this has not happened. But let's say you don't personally have to say this has happened to you, but if this happened, why do you think it happened? Why do you think maybe some of your colleagues had an issue passing the information?

Gu: Sometimes, the information does not get to them in time.

A: So, you think it is because they got the information too late. Okay, that is one reason. Any other reasons?

Ba1: Sometimes, the information comes too late. Like if it comes early in the morning and you have already planned something else.

A: So, it is because of lack of time. You have your own things to do. That is also a good reason. Are there any other reasons?

Gu: Sometimes, I think motivation is also the issue.

A: Motivation?

Gu: I think lack of motivation affects it.

Ba1: Our community is like this; you cannot pass the information unless you make an announcement. And the announcement also they will ask for money.

Gu: So, it is a lack of money. If you want to make an announcement for the whole community sometimes, you have to use the community center to pay.

(The mosque etc., has a speaker which is used for call meetings, but they ask for a small amount of money when you want to make an announcement).

A: So that might also sometimes make you not want to use it because you know you have to pay?

Ba1: Yes, sometimes because of that, the information is not passed to the farmers.

A: Okay. Any other reasons you can think of? I would hope that everybody tries to at least think of something. I cannot force you, but that is what I hope.

A: One reason which I would add to this is what I have heard that sometimes even if you make an announcement not all the farmers come. So sometimes, simply the ones who don't participate don't get the information.

Ba1: Sometimes you even give the information, but they will pretend that they didn't hear it.

Gu: They have other work.

A: Okay. If we talk about the whole process or the whole schedule of this, we all know that we are late from the annual plant, which I also showed to you in training. So, you know that we are very late from the schedule. I believe that there are many reasons for it. One observation is that simply Agro Eco and A Rocha have been late. The sensitization was done in March. That could have been in time because it was not yet the planting time, so it was okay. But when we talk about the CIS training, for example, I did it in May, I believe late May. If the farmers were supposed to start repairing land and planning in May, it was too late because you still needed time to train the farmers. So, your training was late, so you were provided the information late and the farmers training was also done very late. And also, many of you delayed. Some of you also did it in time as soon as you could, but some of you delayed the training. So there part of the fault comes on you as well. On the other hand, I also know that it was very difficult because the planting season had already started, and it was

very difficult to gather the farmers because they were busy at the farms. So that was also an issue that came from the CIS training being done too late that actually the farmers' training should have been already done before the planting season so the farmers would have time to attend. So, this also caused you an issue. Is this true that this was a challenge for you?

Gu: Yes. Actually, some of us the training came in late and sometimes too the drought you need the rain before you start planting. That is also an issue for the planting. Some people in my area I spoke with A Rocha maybe we can do something to help the farmers. Maybe some small loan so they can use it to prepare their land faster.

A: yes. That brings another topic to my mind. Another issue with this annual plan which I see is that it is not made for the local conditions. So, a problem which I also see with communication is that often there is somewhere in the top that makes these plans and gives it to A Rocha, who gives it to the CIS who provides it to the farmers. But the plan is not actually realistic when you look at the local conditions. When you look at when the rains come, you cannot plant in February. Or you cannot harvest in November because the rains have not ended properly. And this is how the plans are done in Accra, and then there are mistakes in them because they haven't gotten the information from here from the local conditions from you who know the local conditions. So, there is see kind of a lack of communication from down-to-top. A lack of communication, not even in the sense that they haven't gotten the knowledge. I think at some point they also got to know it, but somehow, I feel that sometimes it is ignored. In the beginning, they were not asking you, and that is why they had the wrong information. In the next year, they got to know it, I believe, but in the second year, they came up with the same plan, so they were ignoring it. So, there is still a lack of common understanding. Is this something you have observed that you agree? Or do you have some thoughts about it?

Gu: Yes, it is true to me.

Ba1: Sometimes, there is no planting material.

Mu1: There are some farmers even if you tell them in February, they will not plant any because they used to say that plant around March, but you cannot plant any. In June, July August, they plant.

Ba1: the farmers they because of the cattle they don't plant early. If you plant early, the cassava is growing, and the cattle will come. You cannot leave the cassava. When you plant it (cannot hear the audiotape properly because there is a loud sound of a car passing)

A: yes, that is also a local condition. And another thing that Murugu CIS was also saying is the preference of the farmers. This is also something which I am seeing that is ignored in the communication from down-to-top in the decisions and plans. What the farmers prefer here is to start with yam and groundnut and maize and then, in the end, the cassava. And how I understood it is because if you plant the cassava late, it will still survive, but if you plant the other crops late, they will die.

Gu: they will die.

A: So, this is why the farmers are doing this. Why the plan is done like this is because you get the best yield out of the cassava when you plant it early. Then you get to harvest it early. But this plan is made just thinking about the cassava project, and it does not take into account the real situation in which the farmers have that they are not only growing cassava they also growing other crops. And when you look at that economically, maybe it is even better than to only grow the cassava. But they haven't come to talk about it with you, so there is a lack of communication what I observed.

Gu: those people who plant late that year cannot harvest, but the next year, they can harvest. So, I was thinking even if it comes to planting late, we should give them the chance to plant late but with the mind that if that person plants late, then he or she cannot harvest in the same year but rather next year. But next year, he will plant again, and when he plants it, that means every year it will continue.

A: and that is something that the farmers should understand. They should understand the benefits of planting the cassava early, but they should maybe be given the possibility like now we have this plan, but we are not going according to the plan. The planting was supposed to end in May. So, A Rocha is also forced to adapt anyway whatever is on the paper. But this also kind of changes the whole plan, so what I think is that this knowledge should already be there when planning.

A: what comes to the planting sticks? This brings another kind of issue or something we should improve. It is not that A Rocha is not trying to respond to your challenges or problems, but it is slow, or this is what I see. I know that already in March, when we visited the communities with Agro Eco, it was mentioned that the farmers do not have planting sticks, but it was ignored. Nobody was reacting to it from the office or from Ageo Eco. Also, I was not reacting to it. So, we knew from March already that there was a problem with the planting sticks, but it was not recognized. Then coming to later, we realized that it is a big problem and that the farmers are not planting if we don't help them. That was the point when A Rocha started to help you with it. But I see in common the challenge with these problems is that you tell them, but the times you tell it and the time that they react to it is often slow and taking long. And this is also kind of delaying the whole process of communication. Is this something you have observed? Or do you have an example you want to add? Or has this never happened to you?

Mu1 is speaking but cannot understand the audiotape because of a car in the background.

A: So, it is true, but you cannot tell an example?

CIS Gu is speaking but still cannot understand the audiotape because of cars.

A: No example? Kpulumbo CIS and Bawena CIS, you have been quiet. You just one to come here and eat my food, ha?

CISs were laughing.

A: I would like to hear at least one example if you agree.

Gu: I really don't know the structure because A Rocha is in a partnership with Accra. So how do they get the information? I think that is what it is, maybe why the process is long.

A: that is true that is part of the issue.

Gu: For example, when A Rocha came to us, they said that I should organize people that have conventional cassava, but the farmers were delaying, and in the end, A Rocha didn't even come to. And then I was telling lies because they were keeping it in the storage, but they never came.

A: So, especially in these kinds of situations, it is sometimes difficult for A Rocha because sometimes they don't make the decisions here, but it is made in Accra. And they have these kinds of organizational structures. But in some issues like the planting sticks example, this decision was made here, and it was not because of delays in Accra. So often it is because of that, but sometimes it is also that they have too many things in their mind to remember that there was this problem.

P: Okay, record keeping is also a provision of information, but it is not really working. Or do you disagree?

(CIS mutters around)

A: So, you think it is working?

Gu: yes

A: So why is it then that when we come to look

Gu.: where it is not working is when the farmer has done something; sometimes they don't tell the CIS, so you cannot know, so it would be a problem. But in our own records that have been documented, I don't think.

A: But that is what I meant that the farmers are not keeping records. And this I also know in Gurubago is a problem. So, you have a challenge because the farmers don't come to tell you?

Mu1: sometimes it is not from the CIS because sometimes the farmers whatever he does on the farm they should write. If you cannot write, then you should bring the book to the CIS. So, when the time comes, how would we know.

Ba1: Also, they have somebody in their houses if they cannot write they can ask someone who can write there.

A: so why do you think they are not bringing the record books? Why are they not keeping records? I heart that in some places, they are even using the pages to roll cigarettes.

CISs were laughing.

A: So why is it that they don't like the record-keeping?

Mu1: you know some we are not used to record-keeping.

A: okay. So, you think it is because it is something new to them.

Mu1: Ahaa...

Ba1: They don't have time for record-keeping.

A: But I think there are also some other projects where they do record keeping. Which community was it? I don't remember anymore. It was with the small loans they also had to keep records. But they were women. And there it worked. Sometimes it's not only that they are not used to it. I don't know if it is also may be that they don't see the value in it. Maybe they don't see it as useful.

Gu: Our farmers need much education. Because some of them don't know record keeping is a serious thing, they don't see the value in the recording. But perhaps if we keep on sensitizing them that they are doing the records for themselves.

A: so, let me ask you why do you think they have to keep the records?

Gu: the record-keeping is actually a good thing. They should keep the records for their own interest. So, you record what has happened on the farm. So those who come to your farm take the record book and look that you are actually following instructions which have been given to you.

A: So, you are talking about the organic certification. So, you have to have the record-keeping because of the organic certification. Are there any other reasons?

Ba1: For easier reference.

Ba2: For them to know the schedules for themselves.

A: very good. So, it is also for the farmers.

Ba1: It is useful if you plant you can see that I plant this time and it didn't do good so I won't make that mistake to plant like that again.

A: Exactly! So, it is for the farmers to learn what they have done and to improve for them to know when the best time is to plant how to get the best yield. How much have they spent and how much were the profits is it worth to do it? Or maybe they calculate that they got more money from groundnut, and they go to groundnut farming. Or they know that they got more money from cassava, so next year they decide to put a little bit more effort into cassava farming. It is for the farmers as well. It is very important for organic certification, but it is also helpful for the farmers. So, this is what I mean by it when I said that the farmers often know what they are supposed to do, but they don't understand what the benefit of it for themselves is. So, I think record-keeping is one example of this.

A: Okay. Then one observation which I make is that the language used in the papers like the contract, or the internal inspection form is actually a very difficult language. It is a language that is pretty much impossible for the farmers to understand even if they would speak English, and it is a language that is difficult for you, the CIS, to understand and to translate. I could not give the contract to a CIS to read it. I had to first think about what this means and explain it with easier understandable English what it means. But I think for communication, it is not very good because what you are trusting on is my explanation of it without really understanding what you are committing to what is actually said in the paper. So, I see a bit problematic. It should be done in a way that you could easily understand and explain it to the farmers because you are the ones the farmers are supposed to trust that they are not signing something which they don't want to sign. It is not me whom they are supposed to trust. It is you whom they are supposed to trust. So, is this something you have noticed, or do you think it is possible for you to understand? Was it a kind of language you could understand?

Gu: I think we can. We can even put it into our own dialect or language. So, I think in English to me it is okay.

A: But you are also a bit more highly educated as you are a teacher. So how is it for the rest of you?

Ba1: All of us here can read.

A: but it is not about being able to read; it's about

Gu: If I am getting you right, you say that the language they use or the kind of words they use in the contract is difficult for us. Is that what you are saying?

Mu1: are you saying that we should change it to our language

A: that is also an option. But what I really mean is that the kind of English which they are using in the contract is kind of law English. And the law of English is even more complicated for me to understand because English is not my mother tongue. Let me see if I can find the contract. Here.

A: So here, let me read, or is it my accent that is difficult?

Gu: Go on.

A: Okay. "The organic products within the Mole project will be sold to both local and international buyers as viewed appropriate by the market prices. It should be known that organic production does not only mean not to use of non-organic chemicals. It also involves

the basic principles and practices aimed at sustainable production system based on ecological cycles and precaution.” So, what did I just say? Did you understand?

A: So, I read from here to hear.

The CIS 1 from Bawena has been looking at the contract for a little while.

A: I can already say that it is a bit challenging for you if you need this much time.

Ba1: Okay. What does it mean is that organic production is for what? For the Mole organic landscape but there are also other international buyers for the organic. But it doesn't mean that we should use chemicals. But that is what let me see. What does it mean that this one is based on the principles of what? To the organic cassava to other what? It should be based on ecological (cycles) like the landscape you shouldn't burn; you shouldn't do anything so that it will come out organic.

A: Do you know what ecological cycles mean?

Ba1: It means that the environment should be protected.

A: Does somebody else try to? That is something else that is not what ecological cycles mean. Does somebody else explain what ecological cycles mean?

Ba1: so okay, it is based on principles and precaution. Precaution means that, like eh, it means that you should take time.

A: take time?

Ba1: it means that you should be careful. It means that if you have something, you should (cannot hear)

A: That is not what precaution means. What does it mean?

Gu: it means the laws that have like something that you should not do.

A: In a way, yes.

Gu: things that you should not do.

A: it is not only the things you should not do. Precaution means when you take action to prevent something. It is not only the things which you should not do; it is also the things that you should do. So, for example, if I want not to get wet when I walk home, a precaution is to bring my rain jacket. And ecological cycles mean the

Ba1: being protected.

A: No, it is nothing with protecting. It is simply how the environment is working. So, one ecological cycle is how you get the dry season and then again, the rainy season. That is an ecological cycle. Also, how we have a day, and we have a night that is also an ecological cycle. In my country, it is how we get winter and summer. These are ecological cycles. And organic farming principles mean that we work with them. So, for example, it does not mean that you bring here a lot of water so that you are able to farm in the dry season. It means that you farm when there is water. That is what it means.

A: So, this is what I mean that some of the words or things are not really easy to understand. The concepts are not concepts that you may understand very well. So that is what I mean by maybe not only the language, but it needs better explanation before it is translated. But what is on this paper I don't think it is something you can deeply understand. Even if I read this

paper to somebody in Europe whose mother tongue is not English, they might not understand it because they never studied agriculture or never practiced agriculture because this is also related to the word like ecological cycles or principles of sustainability or organic farming. This is something if you do not have anything to do with agriculture, you might not know. So that is what I mean by saying that the language which is used is not always so easy to understand. So, is this something you still think that you can understand, or do you agree? Now when we did this example, do you think you now understand it?

Gu: I think if they make it lower, it is better. Because I may understand it, but others may not understand it.

A: Okay. Do you agree?

CIS together: Yes, we agree.

A: Okay. Then something which I heard from a few people is that sometimes the CIS you feel that the farmers will take the information more seriously if A Rocha people come and tell it. So, this is something that only a few CIS told me. So, do you think that in common it is true? Is this a challenge for you that sometimes the farmers don't take you seriously or maybe don't come to the meetings?

Kp1: there are different communities. In my community, there are no challenges.

A: that is exactly what I want to know. Somewhere it is a challenge, and somewhere it isn't.

Mu1: In my community, sometimes there are challenges.

Ba1: they are telling that you are not someone unless you have something,

Gu: What he says is true. In other communities, it may differ. Because most of the communities as a CIS, you also have to attract them. So, the point is you also want to see you involved with their problem-solving. Anytime you call them for a meeting they will also come.

A: okay. so, you have to somehow

Gu: involve yourself in their problems.

P: okay. And that may also be a little bit of a challenge.

Gu: If I call them, they will come because always if they have a problem and that problem needs.

A: so, you feel that it is not a problem in Gurubago? So, we have this challenge than in Murugu and in Bawena. Okay.

Mu1: Sometimes if a meeting is called by A Rocha people most will come because nowadays in our community for instance when a meeting is called people will say that after the meeting, they will be given something to drink or something like that. But A Rocha people when they call a meeting there is nothing to give them.

A: So, are there some other organizations that are giving them something?

Mu1: yes

A: But A Rocha is not.

Ba1: A Rocha is not.

Gu: I by my brother. Most of the communities, even the women, also suspect the CIS when you call a meeting, and they come, and they don't get anything they think that you have been keeping the money.

Ba1: the blame that the CIS took them.

A: I see. So, it also creates a kind of mistrust towards you because they think they were supposed to get something?

Gu: yes

Ba1: is A Rocha not giving then or is the CIS spending the money.

Gu: what I want to say to also to Accra. I have seen that the CIS they are doing well, but what they get us as allowance it is too small.

Mu1: don't say an allowance. It is for fuel.

Ba1: there are times that I do something for A Rocha, and I have to spend more than that.

Gu: how much is the cost of fuel (cannot hear audiotape)

A: This is an issue that they do know at A Rocha. This is one of those issues which is not decided alone here but also in Accra, and I believe that is one of the reasons why it has been slow to develop.

Gu: I don't know why they don't also talk to the CIS in their decision-making like to know the problems the CIS are facing.

A: This is how, unfortunately, this kind of project happens. I think it is not good. That is why I choose this as my topic.

Gu: it one year to go and meet them in their community, and you will see how serious they are. Some of the CIS don't even have a motorbike; you go and beg.

A: lest than talk a little bit about this. What I have seen during the time I have been here sometimes you have not been getting your allowance at all, and you were not motivated to work at all. So, when you are saying that the CIS is doing well and working hard, maybe you were before I came here, but during the time I have been here, I also haven't seen you working hard. I understand why because you were not getting your allowance, but I also haven't seen you working hard.

Mu1: Fuel money, not allowance.

Gu: Is it all the CIS?

A: Fuel. I know that in Gurubago, you seem at least very motivated when you come there, but when you see how few people have planted in your community, it speaks differently.

Gu: yes, like we were telling the person wants to farm groundnuts, then yam.

A: yes, but last year they planted earlier.

Gu: I am promising this year we will even exceed the number.

A: just looking at the numbers, there are more problems.

Gu: we should put a structure in such a way that the early farmers could farm, but you more along with everybody. I think it would be okay.

A: That is an interesting idea.

Gu: because some of them didn't even know how to farm. They want to farm. But first, they want to farm their groundnuts.

A: I understand, but despite that, this year has been worse than last year. I don't think any of you have gone to inspect the farms' ones in a month.

Gu: Some CIS we are even going twice in the month. So, we even do more than that.

A: So, you are saying that you have done that?

(CISs are silent).

A: No, you have not. I understand why you are not motivated, but it is still a fact that you are also not doing your work.

Gu: we are human.

A: that is it. Then let's talk about the money issue. I agree that you should receive money because they are demanding a lot from you. Nevertheless, the reason why they are not paying you is that this is how the project works; it is business. You grow cassava; you get the money; you pay money to the workers. This is how it went last year. It is nothing for Gurubago because you did not sell last year yet. But last year there were issues with the buying. Instead of six tones, they got ten tones. Instead of peeled cassava, they got unpeeled cassava. The cassava is still at the mill; it has not been sold. So, the cassava was not sold. They did not get money. Nobody has been paid.

Ba1: and the project is ending.

A: The project is ending, but now they want a second phase, so if they are lucky, they will get some money for that. If we do good this season, they will get the money for that if we get the numbers.

Gu: we will get them.

Ba1: this is something. Instead of getting something, it is just a little bit of that. Suppose we get the fuel allowances. Look at the number of new farmers they have got. So some of them, we are encouraging them to farm. So, if they don't encourage us, how can we encourage them.

A: yes, but do you understand like A Rocha has a budget. It has a budget for this project and a budget for this project, and a budget for this project. The budget for this project is finished. There is no money until the second phase comes, or there is no money until the cassava is sold. So, no matter what you would deserve, it doesn't exist at the moment. It doesn't exist until the cassava is sold. It doesn't exist until we have the numbers and the second phase. Now it is your decision if you are motivated enough to work until that in the hope that then you will get paid.

Gu: to be my advice to all of the CIS, when we go back, we should sit with our fellow CIS. You know there is a saying in my language ones you started again already, you are in the middle, so rather move forth than go back. So, to make sure that we the CIS who have started, we should look for a solution very well for them to do the second phase so we can give them our conditions. We are already in there.

A: that's it. But this actually brings an interesting point for me which I want to ask you. Do you trust A Rocha? Do you trust that when they get the money, they will pay you?

Gu: I trust A Rocha.

Kp1: yes,

A: How about Bawena? Murugu?

Mu1: (car; cannot hear the audiotape)

A: So, you think there have been too many problems?

(CIS discussing in their language)

A: So, you CIS (1) Murugu also think the same.

(CISs discuss between themselves)

A: you can discuss it if you want. But just to say that things have been happening differently in different communities or things have been communicated differently. So what I want to know is also how does it affect the amount of trust you have towards A Rocha. So I know that, for example, in Murugu, some things have caused that there is no trust anymore. How is it in Bawena?

Ba1: sometimes, they will bring us things to sign. They will give some amount of money for an assignment. After you sign, they will give you the money. So, if I sign and then you don't know how much has that person been given to.

A: So, this is also causing mistrust?

Mu1: there was (the MC), and I don't know. There was a person who asked one of them, A Rocha office people what he told (the MC), but they said that they would discuss that in the office. For me, I thought that they didn't want us to hear what they discussed.

Mu2: that is where I think the work is they are not being transparent.

A: so, you feel that they are not being transparent with you?

CISs together: yes

(CISs were talking to each other in their local language.)

A: I would appreciate it if you could have your discussion in English. Otherwise, you're not being transparent with me.

(CISs were laughing together.)

Gu: What we are saying is that actually, we cannot sit here to blame A Rocha too much because they are also under some pressure. If A Rocha worked alone, but they are also working for somebody, we also should not blame them alone. So, to me in our community, even at any meetings I go to, I appreciate A Rocha more than anything. Because (phone ringing on the background and cannot hear audiotape)

A: I would like to hear what Kpulumbo CIS wanted to say?

Kp1: the same thing

Gu: to me, in any organization, there will be problems, so A Rocha also has these problems, but we should not put them down too much.

A: that it. I mean, we all have our own experiences with A Rocha, and right now, I am doing research, so I try not to agree or disagree with you. I just want to hear what you say, and I write that down, and I do my analysis. So, this is how you feel about it; this is okay. I will note it down.

Gu: me and my brothers, we trust A Rocha, and some others may not. But this is also okay because then they also know that they should improve.

A: that's it. And I also hope when I discuss this with A Rocha, they will take note of it and try to do better. Something I noticed is that sometimes the farmers don't always tell A Rocha or me their true reasons why they are not planting or why they are not doing something. Or sometimes they wait very long before they tell about their problems. For example, in Gurubago, we came there, and we were surprised to find out that they don't have planting sticks and they had not told us before. Or sometimes you ask them why they are not planting, and they tell some reasons, but actually, it is about something else.

Gu: sometimes, there is no financing.

A: that is also one reason. But do you agree with this observation that sometimes the farmers wait very long before they tell their problems?

Gu: yes

A: or sometimes they tell other reasons like excuses? Does anybody else recognize this?

Gu: sometimes they give the problems, and we give the problems to A Rocha, but A Rocha will also not act early.

A: we were talking earlier. But it is also making the process very long when the farmers' first wait very long before they even tell about their problems. And then A Rocha takes long to react to it, and then we are already way past the time that something was supposed to happen. But also, something that I observed that often when I was talking with you the CIS, you told me about a challenge, and I was asking you if you told A Rocha, and you said no, you haven't. And often the reason was, for example, that you wanted first to discuss it among yourself and then you wanted to wait for a meeting with A Rocha to tell it. So sometimes, it also takes a long time for the CIS to tell the problems to A Rocha.

(CIS murmuring)

A: you think it is true. What do the others think? Is it true?

Gu: when you were in my area, I said something, and I stand by it. I said A Rocha have to make sure that the Accra people or whoever that the CIS gets certificated. It is a key thing. Someday I can support my CV.

A: I remember that. I don't know how this kind of certificate works in Ghana. Otherwise, I could write it for you myself and then ask A Rocha to give it. But I am from Europe, so maybe the system is different. But A Rocha already knows. But I will keep reminding them.

Gu: maybe an international one. (laughing) In addition, CIS must be given enough time for training. Like a trip somewhere.

A: Hmm. If there is a good amount of money coming, maybe it is possible.

Mu: (car; cannot hear audiotape) the CIS is also supposed to be given a uniform, so whenever the CIS is coming to the farm, they will be seeing us.

A: Hmm. This is again when there is money this kind of thing can happen. You know that this project is actually supposed to be owned by the CREMAs, and at this point, the decisions are supposed to be made by you in the community on how you use the profits. So, then you can go and buy these shirts if you want or you can also make a trip like this if you want. It is your decision at this point when the project is yours. But that we get there first, we have to help you to build the system up so that you can easily be running it yourselves. But as long as the system is not working, and the money is not coming in also this kind of things cannot come. So maybe that is also something also to motivate you to get good yields from your farmers. But I remember you told me this and I have made a note of it.

A: what I want to talk about a bit is the processing of cassava. So, there was some confusion about it. So first, you were told not to peel it. You were told to clean it with the brush. And then, in February, you were told you needed to peel it. Were the farmers already harvesting at this time? Do you remember?

CIS (Mu): it was not in February. It was in March.

A: So, the information didn't get to you until March? So the problem was that they were already harvesting. So, this is unfortunate as I already explained that sometimes this information comes from the customers. So that is what I mean by the long chain of communication.

A: So, let's talk about the buying and the pricing. So how I understood from the farmers is that they were all very disappointed because they felt that they had been told that A Rocha would buy at a higher price than the market price. But this year, the market price was very high, and A Rocha could not buy higher than that. So, the farmers were disappointed because of that.

Gu: people are not motivated to farm because if I farm and the one who is doing non-organic cassava sells it at a higher price, it will demoralize.

A: Okay, so it was demotivating for the farmers. With the buying, there was a delay from the A Rocha side getting the approval from Accra and so on. So, when they started the buying, it was already a little bit late, and I understood that in some communities like in Murugu, for example, the farmers refused to sell because of the price. Am I correct?

Murugu CIS: yes

A: So, this is also one of the reasons why instead of sixty tones, A Rocha only got ten tones and why A Rocha is not having problems with money. And this again is demotivating for you because you are not getting the benefits which you were expecting, leaving us where we are now. So, the interesting thing with the pricing is that it is possible that A Rocha actually caused the prices to rise because the year before, they bought all of the conventional cassava. So, then there was a lack of cassava people willing to pay more. I believe you know that the prices of cassava change like this.

Kp1: all the communities we know.

A: You also know. So maybe next year, A Rocha will still be able to offer you a good price even when the conventional price is low.

Gu: why are they not also taking some money for the CIS from what they are selling?

A: they would. That is the plan.

Gu: it is better because you go and pay. I am thinking that when you are buying, take this out. Because in the community, when you tell them, they will react.

A: it is just out of the profit; it is not out of the farmer's money. The idea is that when there is profit, the CIS will be paid. But it is still in the process of deciding.

Gu: you say ten cedis per bag is too much. Working for one year is also much.

A: yes, but do you know how much you are supposed to get per community? A farmer, if they are able to do one acre, they, are supposed to get 20 bags. So how many farmers do you have?

Gu: I think close to 100.

A: So, 600 bags.

Gu: Five cedis per bag.

A: but I am not the one who decides about this.

Gu: we, the CIS we, also should have a meeting together and come up with the challenges.

A: The last thing which people were mentioning is the commitment to the project farmers especially. So, the worker here many of them feel that the farmers are not really committed to the project. Maybe they don't see the economic benefits of it. And what they want is A Rocha to give things. Like they want to get water and food or soap. They are more interested in getting things from the project than actually the project itself.

Gu: actually, I would disagree.

A: Please explain me,

Gu: why I disagree is that A Rocha afforded the training before. People come to the training and think that they would get soap or anything. If the person actually comes to sit in the meeting and then hear what the person has thought, and they put it in process. If I get my cassava, it will be better.

A: Do you think the farmers In Gurubagu see it like this?

Gu: yes, it is also part of education.

A: yes, but do they see it like this?

Gu: yes. That is why if we call a meeting in our community, they will come whether: how you give something, or you don't give.

A: how about the other communities? Do you think the farmers are committed?

M1: they are committed anytime you call a meeting; some of them will come. Some of them are.

A: how about Bawena?

Ba1: Some of them are committed.

A: do you think most of them all or some are?

Ba1: (cannot hear the audiotape)

A: So, you think the reason why they are not committed is that they haven't seen the benefits yet.

Ba1: sometimes, it is like we are (cannot hear)

A: Sometimes, you think that we are actually the reason why they are joining, and that is why they are not really motivated.

Ba1: hmm.

A: Because they have been pressured to join?

Ba1: hmm.

A: Okay. How about Kpulumbo?

Kp1: some are, and some are not.

A: And what is the reason?

Kp1: when you look at some of the farmers do are committed, they used to price A Rocha, but those who are not committed don't even have time.

(Rest of the conversation is not related to the research)

FGD: AGRO ECO - LOUIS BOLK INSTITUTE

Date: 5.8.2021

Participants:

Director of Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute (D)

Value-Chain Coach of Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute OM4D Project (VCC)

Author/intern (A)

(the author presented the research methods and positive findings)

VCC: It was good to hear so of these positive things about the project. You mentioned the intercropping the knowledge about how to do intercropping, so I wish you capture that also as a bullet point with the good agricultural practices that the farmers have learned. It is all about the management of their land, which gives them a better livelihood. Also, you mentioned that they said about the do's and don'ts for a Rocha; I wish you would also capture it for the project because that is not only coming from a Rocha. It is also positive feedback also to the project.

D: Okay, the first point on the methodology, which is that you are talking fast and saying a lot of things that are not in the PowerPoint. Will you provide all this information later in a report?

A: yes

D: something about the positive parts in the communication with the farmers. I recognize a lot of things, but also, let's say note that the information is still fairly low level, let's say beginnings level. Like let's say organic farming is healthier for you, and okay, you can do crop rotation, and they may know the dos and don'ts, but they may not be practicing it. So, it kind of its good information, but it automatically opens the door to what the follow-up for the information is. That would be my two reflections.

VCC: I think that it is an important point than in your explanation you can. Still elaborate in the points, like the health fact, that they are eating well, and also the good agricultural practices.

A: challenges in communication: a long chain of communication, organizational structural things are delaying the flow of information and network problems. CISs feel that they often get very short notice. Not so good communication about the responsibilities.

VCC: it is actually always the case of delaying in communication and finances and the activities, but I can see that all of your endings are too late, but I think there is something leading to, some cause for the training being late, for the CIS activity being late, so I think the focus should be on what is the reason for that activity being late. If, for instance, the long chain of communication is the reason, but I saw the first arrow pointing at Godwin, but I think most of the time (Agro Eco's Director) doesn't speak to (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager) directly.

A: That is from the ICS manual

VCC: yea, that should have been the structure or organization, I would say. But communication comes from (Agro Eco's Director), either to myself or to (the MC), or to (the Administrative/Documentation Officer). So normally, it is not direct. So maybe you can change the arrow. To (the Administrative/Documentation Officer) or to me because he is on the field. In the emails, we try to copy each other, but I think it doesn't mean that is how it is done.

VCC: On the second point, there is the CISs getting a late notice for their activities; one other item that caused the proximity to the Damongo to the village. Sometimes before they send the text message, I think that is the last solution; first, they try to go with the motor.

A: no, that is the first option they do. Going to the communities is such a big effort that they actually normally communicate via phone or text messages.

VCC: so, what I learned is that Kpulumbo for instants never has a network, so it has to go first through Bawena before it gets to Kpulumbo. So, I am looking at the proximity from Damongo to the communities, so that is actually a factor, so that should come put well. Like means of communication, like with the motorbike, delivery of message which finally will go late. Do you remember the guys actually said that they will never turn their phones on? Even when they see it, they will complain that they have not seen it, and (the ICS Manager) will complain at the point in time that at least if they send a text message, it should go through, whether it has pended for a day or two surely they have received it? The time that they would have received the message that they need to take a certain activity. I think this should really focus, that this is really hampering the information to get to them. The challenge is the focus.

VCC: And the last point, the activity and provision of information to the CISs is often made too late. Yes, it is done too late because of something. Activity one because there is no, for instance, realize of funds, like you mentioned money or budget was not provided in time. I think that should be the focus.

A: But I don't think that was the main reason. I think that we already knew that there are problems with A Rocha, and that is why (the Field Supervisor) and I were sent there, but when we communicated about the responsibilities of (the Field Supervisor) and me, we didn't take into account that (the Field Supervisor) is not there at the time when these activities which he is responsible for should happen.

VCC: yea, but you mentioned that the provision of information and activities to the CISs is often made too late. But what is really causing it, I think that should come out, what is really causing it. Is it somebody's irresponsibility to act?

A: what I see is that it is a kind of avoidance of responsibility. So, what I see is that a Rocha is not really taking responsibility for it. But what was our solution to it was to send (the Field Supervisor) and me there. But we also failed in that.

VCC: I would say that if it was avoidance of responsibility, it should come out, but it should end that often done too late.

D: I think it is still to come. I think there are many different aspects to it, and we can analyze it, but it is also quite complex, you could say. Because we talk on one, say about the timing of activities, and we talk about the communication about when the visits come to the field. You could even separate the communication regarding the field activities. So, the different kinds of communication. What is, of course, important to say is that this whole let's say, "governing body" of A Rocha is not working. You could say that the project is now in its third year and

that A Rocha, everybody should have learned by now when the field activities should take place and like getting sticks for planting.

VCC: yes, the annual plan.

D: but also, internal inspection, etc., and this is a bit missing but can also be explained because (the previous ICS Managers) is gone at the moment, (the Administrative/Documentation Officer) is not there, and I think (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager) is not taking his responsibilities too seriously, also because he is constrained by finances. A Rocha has not been able to communicate its expenditure on the OM4D project subsidized in the last year. So, we don't know how much is left, and we don't know how much is needed for this year. So, A Rocha needs to look into their own corners, or somewhere that they have enough money left to make up the, to pay for the expenditures without having a budget or without knowing that there will be money. And that is quite unfortunate that these bases, planning for this year, and the budget for this year are kind of not established.

D: I don't get any response to my emails to A Rocha since I would say March, so even from before the moment that (the Administrative/Documentation Officer) went on maturity leave. She was also not communicating very much with me, or not, and certainly not after she went on her maturity leave. I never received an email from anybody from A Rocha. So that is where communication goes a little bit wrong on the top.

D: We know that (the previous ICS Manager) is gone. I don't know how well she transferred her responsibilities or tasks to (the new assisting ICS Manager) or not, and then you have another think, let's say in the chain of information, and then we are sending, or OM4D is sending, I myself visited, and (the MC) and they fall into this problem to this communication from (the ICS Managers) and the CISs. And then, I think there is also a problem with the CISs understanding how and when they should communicate with the farmers.

D: This brings me back to a bit of a disappointment that after three years of the project, everybody is still waiting for action for making the next step, instead of just doing the activities. And this dependency, let's say to the instructions from above, the clearance of expenditure is certainly important. A Rocha is typically an activity organization and is not concentrated on the outputs, where people are programmed to go for the outputs; for the results, no people are waiting for the next activity. And they do the activity, perhaps not having a very clear idea of what the outputs should be, what the results should be. It is a very NGO approach, not commercial or result-oriented.

D: I am a bit surprised to hear that there are problems in the marketing you could say, because of all I know is that farmers did peel the cassava in December – January and this cassava was bought by A Rocha in March and because in February – March there was actually no more cassava harvested. There is a little bit less than a ton of peeled cassava which was done after February the communication with Francesca. With (the MC) and (the VCC), and even myself, we started the marketing season in November, so these instructions about peeling or not peeling were delivered in November and were followed by the farmers, but to a limited extent and the farmers basically stopped preparing their cassava. Expect one or two farmers who go this information in February, and they did some peeling. That is also kind of reflecting the no activity things. The mill was opened in January. And that explains why I dislike that kind of activity to happen, let's say during the marketing season because A Rocha is spending money to open the bloody mill, which is closed the next day and not touched by anybody until we come by in March. And A Rocha completely forgets to buy the cassava and to harvest and dry the cassava, which is quite a communication problem also, because there was all kind of problems going on.

D: As you know, the CISs use their motorbikes to go shopping in Damongo and not for fieldwork. A Rocha finds out and says you don't get petrol money anymore because you are misusing motorbikes and even the tricycle. Then I understood in March that it took in the very top of A Rocha in Accra two months to address this problem. So that after two months they got some petrol money again. That is also, let's say, really bad communication, that it took so long, etc. And then the result is that the CISs are not moving around very much during the very critical time of the year, but even a Rocha, the marketing said, (the Administrative/Documentation Officer) was not moving very much on the buying side. Like at some point, she said (Agro Eco Director) stop gesturing to me that we should be buying we will buy everything at the end of the season. Then we came to the end of the season, and the farmers had not dried the cassava

A: which month?

D: in March when we came. So then, the farmers were not making any cassava because of A Rocha.

A: we come to that later

D: So, the main disappointment is that three years into the project, people still don't know, or maybe they know, but they don't do it. Because they are really waiting for, let's say, management to give the instructions. And when let's say it's not there, then they don't do, they don't mind doing anything, or they don't have any activity anymore. So that is really, okay there are problems in the communication, but this is also a lack of management.

VCC: I would like to add that I think it is about the bureaucratic nature of communication in a Rocha; it has to go here to this and this person before I act. It is also causing this delay.

D: yea

A: the buying. There was a problem with the pricing. The contract says that A Rocha will buy the organic cassava will be bought 10% higher price than the conventional.

D: the market price is a big topic. This is a super communication topic; establishing the market price, you could do a Ph.D. It is a circus, and it just needs one farmer to cry that I sold with 180 and then the market price I 180, even if the farmer has sold just one bag.

A: the market price was confirmed that the market price was 200.

D: where's we move, but I don't know if this was properly communicated or understood by the farmers that we said that okay we buy in 50kg bags, which is exactly half of the 100kg bags, assuming that this would benefit the farmers. But the farmers, said in March, I think that we were talking about 60 for a 50kg bags and the farmers were saying that 60 is not enough for a bag, it should be 120 or 150 per bag, not understanding that when you sell half of a bag, the price would be behalf. So that would also be quite a nice communication topic. They were not able to; the farmer insisted that they should get the price per bag without looking at the weight of it.

VCC: yea, I think they only look at the bag but the weight. Looking at the health conditions, we decided to give them the smaller bags, so they shouldn't have said the price of the (?) bag they are used to at the local market to be the same as the smaller one. So it is about the misunderstanding about what a price for the bag is and what the price is for the weight of the bag.

D: the other thing is that you said that sometimes the price was 200, but I didn't hear that. I sometimes heard (Administrative/Documentation Officer) talking in emails about 180 and that we should move to, whereas at that time, I was thinking about 100 and some premium.

So, then this should have been addressed. So apparently, this happened in Murugu, the main village on the road, and when it really has been 200 per bag, it should have been addressed by A Rocha, by the CISs, that okay we register this 200, I may have been 120 per bag, but still. So, we should talk with A Rocha in Damongo about whether we will buy it or not. That they did not do, I think.

A: they did a gap of communication from A Rocha to Agro Eco. When I discussed this with A Rocha in Damongo, they said that they noticed the price change. Initially, they were planning to buy it with 80, and they noticed that the price had increased, so they also increased the price to 150, but it was still less than the market price, which was 200. And there was also the problem that because of budget constraints most likely, because, they had to delay the buying, and then they were already little but out of season, and when you are out of the season the price increases even more.

D: yea, I assume that the 200-price happened, and some farmers delivered, and then that was gone. Then you see the farmers remember that it was 200 and assumed it would be 200 next month, whereas when that truck is gone, there will be no market

A: there was, there was no cassava available, so after the 200 people were buying cassava, even with 250, the price was just getting higher.

D: and the farmers did not harvest?

A: some of them refused to harvest for A Rocha, so that is probably why we have such a low yield of organic cassava. In some communities, they did not harvest because they had a problem with the Fulani. So, if they would harvest and leave the cassava to dry and there would be one day they cannot be at the field, there is a risk that the Fulani will come and drop the cassava from the platform for the cattle to eat it. So, some farmers actually lost their yield because of the Fulani people. So, because of this risk being that big at this time of the year, during the dry season, some farmers decided they didn't want to take the risk of losing their cassava, so they didn't harvest it.

D: so, one thing that we communicated or agreed with A Rocha is that farmers should always be allowed to sell the cassava at a better price; when a farmer knows somewhere somebody to sell with a better price, he is allowed to sell to that person. I don't know. How well this was communicated down the line, say to (the ICS Manager) and the CISs.

VCC: it was later said that they could sell to anybody, as long as they record that this is our total yield that they can get. So initially, this was not part of the communication that they can sell to anybody. The intention was that A Rocha would buy from them whatever they would produce. So now that they can sell to anybody, they have to keep good records that they sold this many bags, so they know their yield from their field. That was initially part of the communication.

D: This is quite, let's say, critical information for (the author) to say report on this the best you can because, in a few months' time, we will have circus happening again. And, of course, marketing is the critical activity in the whole project. If the farmers are not selling the cassava to A Rocha or somebody else, there is really no project anymore, so. We need to do much better. So please report properly on it. Please we also expect you to provide some recommendations

VCC: I also note that I think the farmers need to be trained more when we do the markets training on the knowledge on pricing the bag size and the weight, we should hammer on in better.

A: the farmers said that they didn't know that it would be based on the weight until A Rocha came to buy.

VCC: I would say no, it was the bag that was not clear to them.

A: This is what they told me

VCC: but we did the conventional buying

A: that is probably what they meant

VCC: yea, we did the conventional to pilot it

A: sometimes, the information also doesn't travel well between the farmers, so what also comes about the knowledge about the pricing is that most of them did not know the last pricing for the cassava. Even one of the farmer shows had sold even know the price, but decently those once who did not sell did not know the price

D: it is a great topic because they also recognize that the farmers don't remember the price; they usually feel like they have been cheated that they get a handful with notes and they are not able to calculate, but they remember that 200 cedis. And these 200 cedis will live for very long even if it is not the reality. It shows that we have a very interesting topic to deal with in a few months.

VCC: more training.

D: also, practical role play with scales. With money, they should not expect that they will be paid later. All these things let's say which are discouraging the farmers. Would be packed in training

VCC: in a practical way.

A: termites, planting sticks

D: So, we have two problems. The one on the planting sticks really can be checked down to the fact that the farmers should harvest the cassava in January, February March and should plant the cassava in March, April and then there is no problem with the planting sticks, and this information has been communicated enough for years. And even A Rocha says no, this is not the way how the farmers do tatata... it is not possible. But as there are some farmers who do this who actually plant the cassava in March, before the rain comes, and they are very successful. So, if you would work in time for once, and I think (the VCC) organized an early planting experience when we were there in March, I wonder what comes out of that.

D: But you know, you should not plant in June or July because, of course, there are no planting sticks because it is not simply the time to harvest the cassava. So, because you get the planting sticks when you harvest the cassava, so that is a requiring problem every year, they are very late even with preparing, even with registering farmers, farmers opening fields, or thinking of were to grow the cassava, with preparation the field and then as a fifth step you should plant the cassava. When you start late, let's say when you start in April with this whole activity, then you will not have planting sticks.

A: one of my last topics this planting and harvesting.

D: then to the termites, to say the communication dilemma that farmers will always mention things like why they are not doing things. And it looks like we can rate it from elephants to cattle, to burning, perhaps a monkey here and there, and now termites being the reason why they should not grow cassava, or why they need help with inputs. I am not seeing this picture the first time, but this is certainly not growing cassava; this is dead cassava.

A: There were still green leaves in this cassava.

D: That is very surprising.

VCC: I think we harvested one of these when we went to the field in March.

A: This is the one we harvested.

VCC: we told them they should use the neem, and they have the neem in the community.

A: They don't.

VCC: you are bringing something from the outside. When we started the project, they thought we were bringing different sticks to the plant. And the idea which I also got from (Agro Eco's Director) is that they also grow the local things and consume. So that is also for them to easily manage and appreciate what they have. They always think that when there is a project, it should come from outside to them. So, they will not do it unless you bring it from outside. So, I even talked with the CISs, and he even asked me about the neem. And I said you stick it, and then you apply it. And when we went to Murugu, some farmer had even used the neem to spray. So, these farmers have the idea. When we all went to the field, it wasn't just one person, and when we mentioned that they should use the neem, even the neem use has been mentioned from the beginning. If they don't have, they should have mentioned it when we taught them how to use it.

A: that is exactly what the challenge which I am trying to present to you is, that sometimes they don't tell you.

VCC: s So it is not about A Rocha; to tell is one part about it. So, it is not about the project not acting on it, that part of the line is not really communicating well. Because when you have communicated your problem well, then somebody can give a better solution. So, second part that the team is not reacting, I think you will have to change it. So, with the planting sticks, it is the same issue because they say they don't want to plant. We told them what to do; you harvest, you store; there was another communication coming from A Rocha that they will leave some sticks later on their field, so that was another idea they wanted to introduce. But that was not from OM4D that they should store their sticks on the field unplanted or harvested. I remember when (the Administrative/Documentation Officer) was giving this, we said no, they could save the sticks from the first harvest and plant. Which we saw at one farm, and it is working so if they learn from actually put.

VCC: What I realize is that they need to change their mind from what they know already and practice what we tell them. They find it very difficult to change and be very gradual and making the whole process very slow. That is one very big challenge for the project.

A: isn't that our job; to change their attitudes?

VCC: yes, but they are taking their time doing it. We say plant early; last year, it was the same.

A: I know. I will discuss this later.

VCC: they refuse because they say there is no heavy rain. So, it is not that they have not been told. It is that the action is always very slow.

D: there is communication, but the communication is not perfect or understood or used by all actors in the field. Yes, sometimes the farmers have real problems, and sometimes they think up problems when they see that somebody is coming, and they haven't done what they are supposed to. The farmers can be quite tricky. They may also appear quite devious, but they party due to, let's say, lack of education because they find it, training, or empowerment, they

find it quite difficult, when they have been told a month to plant, they find it quite difficult to do it, and it is not because they don't want to do it, but also because organize themselves. Or they wait for all the other farmers to do it too before they start. So, all of these kinds of processes also have to do with communication in play. And it certainly requires, let's say, constant monitoring from, I think, the CISs, and we are again talking about the performance of the CISs and the reposting from the CISs.

D: What I also miss a little bit is a proper analysis of these problems. I am quite sure when you go back in next month (intern), they would still not have planting sticks, others would have another problem, the burning comes back, or the cattle and the one farmer with the termites may still have termites. And they still may be crying about the termites.

D: so, I had to ask ten times about the elephants until I understood that one elephant came to Gurubago in five years. That is how I know how I understand, not the size or frequency of the problem. I try to grasp the importance of the cattle. We saw someplace where the cattle came true. But my analysis was that this is abandoned farms, the farmers never go there, not even for weeding. So then, don't be surprised when these cattle walkthrough. Also, we had this case where the cattle were visiting the trying place of the cassava, and it was emptied by the cattle of Fulani. So, there is another appearance of the cattle problem. So, we need to analyze this so that, In real terms, we should also realize that the farmers live very much in perceptions. Like the one elephant, maybe it is a problem for all the farmers and all the communities. And that is how problems can multiply or grow themselves in the farmer's mind, sometimes excuses sometimes as real problems. And I think we have since then, from the CIS to the top, needs to understand the problems.

VCC: understanding which is so clear

A: so, there is still a lack of understanding of the problems

D: we should realize we can tackle the elephant problem

VCC: there was an elephant in the field in Bawena; there was a cassava field where I visited, and we saw the droppings and the feet that they have been around. They came sometimes, and the monkeys were rooting the cassava.

A: I also believe that the cattle is quite big. At least the perception of the farmers is huge, but I think in reality it is also quite big.

D: we realize that these problems, whether they exist or not, or are frequent on the farmer field or in the neighbors, are big and need to be said constantly dealt with and addressed because (the VCC), you now see the footsteps of the elephants and did you start again about that the farmers can plant the chilis around their fields to stop the elephant from entering. Do you analyze why no farmer is growing chili around the field

VCC: it's the water problem.

D: (laughing)

VCC: they are never interested in doing early planting

A: we will come to that later. The CISs have trust issues towards A Rocha.

(The author explains the conflicts cause the motorbikes and the perceptions of the CISs in this matter)

D: this is quite serious; I would even say undermining the project. Okay comes down to the relationship between A Rocha and the CISs. I am not sure that this was done well from the beginning or communicated well from the beginning. Because it was quite clear from the

start that A Rocha would ask the CREMA to identify to gather some, let tell agents to work in this organic project because they are supposed to benefit from this project, form the sustainable resource management. I think initially A Rocha looked for some volunteers, not so much related to the CREMA

A: no, the choice was made by CREMA

D: then, there were no such clear agreements or contracts or understanding about what the CISs should do when they should do it and what they would get paid. And I think this whole allowance thing business is based on petrol money.

D: I am even struggling with it with (the Field Supervisor), who also gets petrol money, who now says that he is using too much petrol because he goes too much to the field and wants his petrol money doubled. And I say send me the receipts, and then I get a bunch of receipts in my email. But anyway, the relationship between the CISs is not very good, are thous also the communities who were very using the motorbikes and the tricycles for wrong purposes?

A: in Bawena, not in Murugu

D: I think it was the Bawena tricycle which was seen in the Damongo market with all kinds of products. So, then you get the problem that they are not using the petrol money for the right purposes. And even when they use the motorbike for the wrong purposes, they want A Rocha to repair it. So, you get very strange controversies between A Rocha and the CISs, where the CISs may not be very well instructed and paid and perhaps misusing the motorbike for all kinds of things, and you get in a very bad situation which apparently has not been solved.

D: the agreement should be in the contract that they get paid a bonus for the work well done after the season, but then, of course, they should do the work well, and A Rocha should buy all cassava because then there is some money in the system

VCC: What I observed with this payment when (the previous ICS Manager) was around this payment was used, but she never wanted me to see how much she is paying the CISs. There was a time when I wanted to get close and discovered the payment, she said I was, she then wasn't happy about that, so I didn't want to interfere, just to leave them. Because I know they are also reporting to (Agro Eco's Director) about their finances.

VCC: Then recently, when an amount was agreed on paying them, I asked (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager) and the CISs (author)if you can remember, that ether they are given the money to share, if they are three CISs, they get 300 if they are two CISs they also get 300, not looking at the amount of the farmers. So, there is a bit of unfairness. I told (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager) that we need to look at the payments and how much money is located. Also, apart from the 300 they also give some other small payment. Sometimes when they come to the training, they also give some small allowances, so A Rocha, I think, needs to look at the financial issues. I think one meeting should be based on the finances to be clear about this.

VCC: And maybe I would also suggest to (Agro Eco's Director) is that when they are doing their budgets or expenses, the payments should always come with the (?) to see the total amount that has really gone to the CISs and how much they are supported. I think that would give some clarity. What is really happening on the ground?

VCC: Because the CISs are also not giving a very good picture. One will say this, and another will say other because it varies between communities. Murugu doesn't have a bicycle, he is using his own bicycle, and he is supposed to be given additional money because he is

using his own motorbike and need to care for the maintenance of his own motorbike that was what was communicated. And it is a bit tricky that even after last month when we met, they were also relaxed during their work it affects the whole process. Yes, they said that they had not been paid again, so they are relaxed. Nothing has happened. So, this is my comment on this.

VCC: Ans also the CIS and CREMA relationship, looks like the CREMA is not benefiting from making the CISs present them. So, what has to be clear is whatever allowance is going to the CIS, there has to be like percentage which is going to the CREMA as a benefit to the CREMA from the project. I think that is what they want to see and not see. The reality, the CREMA should see some benefit. I think that would have come up when the project is doing better, the marketing is going well, and the community can get some benefits. But for now, there is no benefit. There should be something to the CREMA also as a community.

D: (the assisting ICS Manager) or A Rocha and the CISs are not clear that the money for their work comes after the season? That is not clear?

A: I think it was clear, and that is why they are very restless because the cassava was sold, but they didn't get any money.

D: they shouldn't expect too much

A: there is a certain lack of transparency in the flow of information. It was me and (the Field Supervisor) explaining that we didn't get enough, and this is why there is a lack of money. But it seems like A Rocha had not told it to them

VCC: Their payment shouldn't affect their work.

D: don't forget (VCC) that the moment the project is over, and A Rocha doesn't have a penny for this project, so you can talk about allowances for the cis and this and that, but A Rocha basically does not have a budget for it because we are nor running in overtime you could say the projected ended in March April. And it is a trouble that we are pushing on to the next marketing season to still have some results within OM4D time. But A Rocha has to do without money, I believe. The project is also quite frustrating for A Rocha. They can partly blame themselves, but there is no money.

A:(the author examines the new topic) responsibilities are not always very clear. There are often misunderstandings from instructions from the manager.

D: it is unfortunate to hear this because I do recognize that things are not always followed up as I suggested or instructed, but I was not aware that this would lead to problems in the field. Also, for the team, it is the third year that we are active, and things should not be so new, and instructions are the result from a couple of times of discussion so, should be understood. It does mean that I or learn from this I should really insist on a monthly reposting from the field, which is actually something that things are well understood by everybody. That is not actually the kind of malmanagement which I like or should be necessary. Because let's say the OM4D team, or the team together with A Rocha team thought it out, can say management this themselves instead of me being somebody from far away to agree or disagree. It is a bit of disappointment.

A: I can mention as addition, these discussions are often after long days of traveling, late in the evening when everybody is tired, and the concentration is not that good anymore.

D: I think you should mention this because it is a real-time problem.

VCC: I would say about the misunderstanding once there is a communication, and we don't understand we do discussion. Some of these things do happen. I don't see it as a challenge,

but it is for clarifications, and it happens. There need to be clear instructions for one to work, but not to happen every time.

A: decisions and plans are made without the participation of important stockholders. A common understanding is not reached.

D: That is how you can learn that a simple thing, or one sentence, or one sentence in the internal standards, can go completely out of control. As I remember, the discussion started with had when farmers are opening a new field, they should not kill the shea trees. Because in the project there is also a shea collection. So, farmers should maintain the shea trees. Later that was translated as not economical trees; farmers should not remove economic trees. This was in the internal standards, but also fraise in different ways in English, and then you can also always wonder how this is translated to local understanding. And I even saw that we moved from. So, three is also an aspect of non-burning. Sometimes cutting of the trees was combined with the burning of the trees, so we came to the burning of the trees, that farmers should not burn the trees and forgot about the cutting of the trees. Anyway, in organic agriculture, we think in agroecology and also in agroforestry even, and that means that organic farmers, it's quite common to have in this climate to have the trees, to have certainly the higher trees. I can imagine that farmers will remove shrubs that are standing in the way and are useless, but the higher once and certainly the economic trees should be kept. And this has been milling around, and then you also bump in, let's say the local knowledge or the local habit, when you are a good farmer you clean, you open your field and that means you kill the trees. Which I think by nowadays knowledge about the environment and the changing of the climate is a completely wrong practice. Even if it is a centuries-old practice, I think it is high time it is forbite especially for organic farmers. Then this whole discussion of this, farmers should be told that when they are removing higher trees from the farm, they are not organic farmers. So, this is discussed, and people say yes, we tell the farmers not to cut the trees and continue, and me hearing after one year that farmers will continue cutting off the trees, and that means we are not looking at an organic project anymore.

D: That means that the farmers and the CISOs, and maybe even (the VCC), have not been too honest, and A Rocha hasn't been too honest about the use of chemicals by the farmers. Because I see more and more common use of herbicides by the farmers, even by the organic farmers, I'm quite sure that at the beginning of the project, we said organic farmers don't use any chemicals. And this has been all kinds of flashed down, and thought differently and not been exposed, like a no-no, but you can see that it's not happening.

A: Who has been telling you that they have not been killing trees or that organic farmers are not using chemicals?

D: You could say that it is from the focus group discussions we did in the communities before starting the project.

VCC: I think that was for the baseline; that gave the impression that they don't use chemicals. But when the first group of farmers was registered, you remember we sanctioned farmers because of chemical usage. It was initially we had 72 farmers but based on their monthly visit which I was three even sometimes, so I think the amount reduced to 60 something. Then finally to 50 because of use of chemicals. So these farmers were sanctioned because they applied chemicals. The chemical use has been the thoroughly monitored cause; otherwise, it would (?) the whole project.

A: The organic farmers are using chemicals in the other fields.

VCC: yes, the other fields are out of a challenge because we said it would all farms, so as a gradual approach, there is a way of engorging them where they grow the maize because usually, they spray on the maize fields. So initially, when we were saying that no, they shouldn't open those fields for the cassava, or the likelihood of (?) would be really high. Then we said that with time, they would all farm in the future; (Agro Eco's Director), if you can remember that in time the entire community becomes an organic community with the organic cassava. Where they are doing the cassava, they are not using cassava, but because they are doing the rotation, gradually, they are stopping the use of the chemicals. Because of those who are doing the maze, there was an idea that they would be applying the chemicals, and it is a very risky area with the herbicides. So, it is a gradual approach that the community becomes an organic community where they stop using the chemicals. That is how we discussed it. So those who are using the chemical that we saw were sanctioned.

VCC: the tree removal, it is quite challenging. I don't know why compared to last year we see more of the trees removed; I don't know if it is because of the new farmers who are coming in, or instead of just telling them to stop that they cannot bend the trees because they were giving a reason that they have to remove the trees to reduce the shade. And in the contract also which was reviewed several times before we agreed on, we settled on the content of the contract we agreed that they would maintain some trees. So no, that it came so much burning all around it is almost of (?) of to stop them from doing it. Now, if you say that nobody should remove the trees or they are not organic farmers, then there is no organic farmer virtually in the community. So that is why I was looking for a way that we can let them have the importance of these trees and as well as do their organic farming that they cannot remove the trees by burning the base. We even mentioned this branch removal, and the tree will broach again, but if they kill the tree completely with burning, it is big damage to the whole environment. That is why I said that we don't tell them that we should not remove the trees, but they should maintain more trees.

D: we seem to discuss every time there is a visit and come to some new approach and new conclusion or some new language in the internal standard on in the contract with the farmers, but it is still, there is no certainty at all that next time when we visit, we won't see the same nice picture as we see in your PowerPoint.

D: it's clear that we, okay, for now, we should do more discussions, but I thought we insisted on doing training of the farmers where all these points are discussed. And we think to check with the A Rocha team and among ourselves when we visit to check with reality.

D: the funny thing is that the killing of the trees has an immediate effect on the termite problem because where you have dead trees, you for sure have termites. So, I believe that when the farmers would not kill the tree, they would have fewer termites.

VCC: they also think that the cassava doesn't need any shade, so they have to remove all the trees from the field.

D: you see that the picture changes over time because you can see that when we entered there, you could see that all the farmers had markets for nothing. There were no markets for yam; there was no market for cassava; there were certainly no markets for groundnuts. Nobody came for these crops because nobody was coming for them. And that was the kind of great option that OM4D would come there with an organic product, then the farmers would go for it. That was the thinking almost four years ago. And now the situation is changing, it is great, of course, that there is another organization providing groundnuts, but now it is disturbing, let's say, our monopoly on the market.

D: I am still kind of puzzled about the first assumptions of the project, like preparing the land when it is the dry season, and they have time. Okay, it is competing with the yam, but still, I find it very unfortunate that we struggle with farmers planting in June – July – August if you don't look out where they should be if they want to have a decent harvest, they have to plant the cassava at the start of before the rainy season and not at the end. And that these things have not yet materialized, or it looks like they will never materialize. There are clear communication problems leading to delays, not very well functioning of the project, which is actually I am seeing some doubts about the future of this project. I must also say that the increasing amount of other operators in this area offering things to the farmers, including a better price. Mainly the problems in communication and management make it a little bit difficult how to organize or construct face two and should we do it at all.

D: I was quite surprised to find out that (A Rocha Northern Sector Project Manager) is the project manager because I hadn't heard anything from (him) before March, and I hadn't heard anything from (him) since March.

D: they are not so clearly communicating about this (lack of human resources), and also last year, I proposed to write a face two proposal for another donor, but it was not picked up by A Rocha.

VCC: Something which would also help is to reduce the bureaucracy and the protocol of A Rocha; it would help with better communication to get things done in time and find the right people for the purpose.

Action Plan 2021

MOLE ORGANIC LANDSCAPE ENTERPRISE – MOLE PROJECT

2021 Action Plan

MONTH/ TIME LINE	ICS ACTIVITY	INDICATOR	RESPONSIBILITY	COMMUNITY LED ACTIVITY
JANUARY	External Organic Certification		ICS Team	Harvesting of organic cassava
	Harvesting of Organic Cassava		ARG ICS team & CIS	
	MARKETING ACTIVITY			
	Quality Management	Analysis of cassava flour	ICS Team/CIS/ Marketing Coach (MC)	CIS to visit farmers inspect and give farmers guidance on processing
	Pilot Processing	Quality Management Training of Farmers	MC /CIS	
	Marketing and Promotional Materials	Testing of milling equipment	MC/ICS Managers/CIS	
		Video	MC/CIS/ICS Team	
FEBRUARY	Audit Corrective action	EU & NOP Certificates	VC Coach, ARG ICS Team	Harvesting of organic cassava, Filing of harvesting and
	Processing buying, storage		ARG ICS Team & CIS	

	and transport of organic cassava	Buying of organic cassava		processing records
	MARKETING ACTIVITY			
	Samples preparation	Samples shipped to Biofach	MC, ICS Team	
	Biofach, profile creation and info-sheets	Exhibitor profile set-up Buyer meetings	MC MC/Intern	
MARCH	Planting starts (early planting/soil nutrition experiment) Buying of organic continues 1 st week Sensitization and registration of new members	Crop rotation and Inter cropping (identify specific crops per community) Purchase tonnage of cassava 5 communities with the potential of adding Mognori and Kaden	Seidu/Rita/VC Coach A Rocha Ghana Seidu/Rita	Harvesting of organic cassava. Update farmer/CIS records CIS start sensitization and recruitment of new members in their communities Farmer training by CIS on Internal standards

				(production) per community.
	MARKETING ACTIVITY			
	Marketing of MLCF-Mole Landscape Cassava Flour	Respond to buyer requests	MC/Intern	Field Visit
		Buyers meeting	MC/Intern	
		Organizing logistics for shipment of 10 tonnes cassava flour	MC/ICS Managers	
		Create export checklist	MC/ICS	
			Managers/Team	
	Quality Inspection	Separation of cassava in storage for local/export marketing	ICS/Warehouse Staff	
		Random sampling and testing	MC/ICS team	
		Review of quality management documents.	MC/ICS Team/Intern	
	Product testing	Recipes/Applications of organic flour	MC/PGS	
	Local market development	developed (local/export)	Coordinator/ICS/CIS	

		PGS registration and marketing of MLCF		
APRIL	Planting (at least 500 farmers) ICS Document review and updates (Manual & Farmer register)	Updated farmer list Updated Farmer register	ICS Managers and CIS Documentation officer	Farmer training; Internal standard (production) CIS Field visit and reporting
	MARKETING ACTIVITIES			
	Marketing of 10/20 tons cassava	Organize production and logistics to supply 10 tons to EU buyer Consolidation and review of buyer information, pricing, marketing materials and handover to ARG	Marketing Coach/ICS MC/ICS Team	Field Visit
MAY	ICS Managers training (online)	Training records documented at ICS office Updated farmer register	VC Coach ICS Mangers (Seidu/Rita)	Farmer registration Farmer records update

	Registration of farmers (by 15 th May)			
	Completion of planting.	Updated Farmer/ ICS records	ICS Managers (Rita)	CIS monthly field visit and reporting
	Secondary crops planting (Crop rotation and Inter cropping)	List of harvested organic fields & list of planted secondary crops Identify specific crops per community	ICS Manger/Doc. Officer VC Coach/MC/Doc. Officer	
	Yield Estimation	Estimated expected yield (2021 harvest)		
	CIS training (Farm maintenance & field visit checks/ Records keeping)	VC Coach/Seidu	Documentation officer	
	Group Risk assessment reviewed and implemented (from May)	Documented Updated Risk Assessment	Documentation officer	
	Farmer register/ ICS document updates (Farmer register, ICS manual)	Certification Body (Control Union) contacted by email		

	Notification for external audit to include secondary crops			
	Marketing and Promotional Materials	Brochure, Video	MC/ICS Team	
	Online marketing	Registration on trade platforms Social media accounts	Marketing Coach	
	Conventional cassava buying	Purchase, storage, and transport of cassava to buyer	Marketing Coach/CIS	
JUNE	Contract signed by new farmers (old farmers reminder)	Documented contract	ICS Managers/CIS	Field inspections
	CIS training (Farm maintenance & field visit checks/ Records keeping)	Documented Training records	VC Coach/ICS Manager	Field inspections
	Internal Inspection Training	Documented training records Internal Inspection report	VC Coach/ICS Manager ICS Managers/ Documentation officer	Internal inspectors attend training

	<p>Internal inspection & Report Review (mid-June to mid- July)</p> <p>GPS coordinates/ farm Sketching/ (during internal inspection) & over-view map per community</p> <p>Corrective action and Approval of farmers for external Audit</p> <p>Letter to District assemblies</p> <p>Self-assessment of the group (4th week)</p> <p>Application for external audit</p>	<p>Field coordinates date/ Sketched maps/Overview maps per community</p> <p>Non-conformities closed/All inspection forms signed</p> <p>GMO and land declaration letters from MOFA</p> <p>Completed report and prepare for external audit.</p> <p>Application sent to Certification Body</p>	<p>ICS Managers/Documentation officer</p> <p>ICS Managers/Documentation officer</p> <p>ICS Managers/Documentation officer</p> <p>ICS Managers/Documentation officer (Rita/Seidu)</p> <p>Documentation officer</p>	<p>Internal Inspection</p> <p>Field GPS coordinate taking, sketching of farms</p>
	MARKETING ACTIVITIES			

	Online marketing	Posting of weekly updates /Farmer stories	ICS Team/Intern	ICS Team to contribute stories to social media account
	Marketing of 10 tons cassava	Organize production and logistics to supply 10 tons to EU buyer	MC/ICS Managers/Team	
JULY	CIS training by ICS Managers – effective field monitoring. All documents updated.	Documented Training records at ICS office All CIS and farmer records updated	CIS/ICS Managers Documentation officer	Farmer training by CIS on Internal standards – farm maintenance (Weeding)
	MARKETING ACTIVITIES			
	Quality Management Training	Quality Inspector & Farmer training (refresher)	MC/ICS/CIS	Field visit and reporting
AUGUST	External audit Application (1 st week of August) CIS training – Processing (Harvesting,	Audit application Training records documented	Documentation officer ICS Mangers/MC/VC	Farmer training by CIS on processing (harvesting, drying and food safety

	drying procedure and food safety) (2 nd week of August) Harvesting of secondary crops (Aug./Sept.) Self-assessment (3 rd week of August) External audit (4 th week – September) Quality Management Training	Harvesting records Completed assessment Quality team trained	ICS Mangers/ Farmer Documentation/ICS Manager ICS Managers/Do. Offocer	CIS monthly field visit and reporting
	MARKET ACTIVITIES			
	Marketing of cassava	Organize production and logistics to supply 10 tons to EU buyer	MC/ICS Managers/Team	Field visit
	Export Checklist	Review checklist and implement actions in preparation for export cycle	ICS Managers/MC	

SEPTEMBER	Corrective action of any audit non-conformities	Submission of Corrective Action to CB.	Documentation/ICS Managers	2 nd Internal inspection of all communities (old and new)
	MARKET ACTIVITIES			
	Yield Projections	Estimated yield projections	ICS Managers/CIS	
	New Marketing	Buyer confirmation of interest/ Buyer meetings	MC/ICS Managers	
OCTOBER	Certificate from CB.	Certificate documented	VC Coach	Raising drying platform old communities for harvesting
	Training of buying team	Trained farmers		CIS monthly field visit and reporting
	MARKET ACTIVITIES			
	Marketing of Secondary crops			
	Processing Cycle	Processing Cycle starts		
NOVEMBER				Field visit

	Sensitization on food harvesting/safety/quality/ - Week 1	previous trainings reviewed with farmer	ICS Managers and CIS	CIS monthly field visit and reporting
	Harvesting of organic cassava – Week 2	Enlistment of ready to harvest organic farms	ICS Managers and CIS	
	External Auditors inspect mill functioning (possibly)	External Audit report	ICS Team	
DECEMBER	Monitoring of harvesting	Harvesting Records documented	ICS Managers & CIS	Harvesting
	MARKETING ACTIVITIES			
	Marketing of 10 tons cassava	Organize production and logistics to supply 10 tons to EU buyer	MC/ICS Managers/Team	
	Export Checklist	Review checklist and implement actions in preparation for export cycle	ICS Managers/MC	



INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM MANUAL

MOLE ORGANIC LANDSCAPE ENTERPRISE (MOLE) - SAVANNA REGION, GHANA



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A Rocha Ghana

KN 3480, Kaneshie - Accra

This ICS Manual is adopted for the fulfilment of the requirements of the EU and NOP organic regulations by members of the Mole Organic Ecological Enterprise

Version 1.2

Compiled by

A Rocha Ghana and Agro Eco – Louis Bolk Institute (OM4D)

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1.0 BACKGROUND

All over the world, people turn to agriculture when food security is mentioned. Food production in sub-Saharan Africa has stagnated over the last 35 years, albeit an increasing population of 2.3% annually. In Ghana, agriculture is undoubtedly the major provider of employment throughout the country. In the Savanna Region, the Mole Ecological landscape is increasingly being degraded of its fragile resources either to support the livelihood of farming communities or fuel unsustainable trade such as charcoal.

The expansion of agriculture particularly crop farming systems therefore if not properly managed poses a risk to sensitive ecosystems such as the Mole Ecological landscape. Hence, to improve food security in Ghana, a farming revolution is needed to cope with the ballooning populations, increased costs of production of agriculture inputs, threatened water resources and environmental degradation.

Farming is the predominate occupation in the communities fringing Mole National Park, in the Savanna region of Ghana. Food crop farming is practiced by about 85% of communities in the landscape. Major crops cultivated in these areas include: maize, cassava, guinea corn, millet, groundnuts and yam. The main farming practices used are mixed farming, shifting cultivation, slash and burn. Shea collection is also a major activity to the group.

It is in respect of the current global concerns about food insecurity, climate change and other issues that A Rocha Ghana in collaboration with Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute under the IFOAM Organic Markets for Development (OM4D) project seeks to develop an organic cassava value chain within the West and North Gonja district of the Savannah region of Ghana.

The project dubbed Mole Organic Landscape Enterprise (MOLE) aims to create opportunities for the smallholder farmers by inclusion into domestic and international organic markets. At the same time, it seeks to facilitate the adaptation to existing and new local and global challenges such as inequity, climate change, scarcity and depletion of natural resources. The project strategy for achieving this is to use the opportunity of increasing demand for organic products as an engine for development to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. The project which is in its first year is currently being implemented in 3 communities namely Murugu, Kpulumbo and Bawena. It envisages to expand to 4 other communities within the 2 year onwards. The current crop focus is cassava. The crop focus is also envisaged to be expanded to cover others such as ground nut, sorghum and maize as the enterprise grows.

This document will serve as the Internal Control System Manual to guide community members to sustainably produce their crops while supporting conservation of the sensitive ecosystem as well as equip them to meet Organic Certification compliance.

1.1 Objectives of the Internal Control System

1. To meet certification compliance
2. To promote sustainable agricultural practices within the Mole Ecological Landscape

2.0 POLICIES AND INTERNAL STANDARD

2.1 Policies

2.1.1 Environmental conservation

Natural resource conservation / biodiversity

- ❖ There shall not be any encroachment in forest reserves with the farming activities.
- ❖ Burning shall not be used as a means of land clearing. Farms shall never be set ablaze to control weeds or vegetation.
- ❖ In clearing land for production, bigger trees and some form of natural vegetation shall be left on parts of the land to regulate the temperature in the farm.
- ❖ Seasonal bush fires which occur in the dry season will be managed through the A Roca Fire management plan.

Protection of water bodies

- ❖ Farming practices shall not in any form pollute water bodies.
- ❖ A 50m or more buffer of natural vegetation shall be left to grow along the water bodies that are close to farms depending on the width of the water body.
- ❖ No use of agrochemical – though organically accepted – shall be mixed along or close to water bodies.
- ❖ The application of agrochemicals – though organically accepted – shall not be done close to water bodies.

Waste management

- ❖ Farms shall be kept clean and free from all forms of waste.
- ❖ Diseased plants shall be buried in the soil away from the farm.
- ❖ All plastics waste (water sachets, snack packages, rubber bags etc.) and papers, cardboard shall be collected and properly disposed.

2.1.2 Land Preparation Instructions

- ❖ Farmers should hand weed their lands in preparation for the planting season
- ❖ Land preparation should be done in workable portions so the farmer is not overburdened with it
- ❖ Where the farmer needs to clear a new plot of land, trees present must be left on the land.

2.1.3 Planting Instructions

- ❖ Farmers are to use only organic propagules/ planting materials in cropping their fields.

- ❖ In the incident where there are no organic certified planting materials farmers can use/ source their planting materials from crops that are free of chemicals for the at least three years.
- ❖ Planting should be done at the right time to coincide with the onset of rains.

2.1.4 Soil fertility management

- ❖ Cultivation techniques to prevent soil erosion shall be encouraged on farms.
- ❖ Farmers shall be encouraged to incorporate leguminous crops in their rotation.
- ❖ No form of synthetic fertilizer or that which is not recommended by the recognized organic certification body shall be used to improve the fertility of the soil.
- ❖ Organic manure, poultry droppings and other forms of animal manure shall be used to improve the fertility of the soil only when well decomposed.
- ❖ After land clearing, the plant debris shall be left to rot on the farm to improve the soil nutrient content.

2.1.5 Pest and disease control

- ❖ No synthetic chemical shall be used as a means of controlling pests, diseases, or weeds.
- ❖ Good farm hygiene shall be adopted to reduce the incidence of pest and disease build up.
- ❖ Farmers shall be encouraged to incorporate leguminous crops in their rotations.
- ❖ Diseased affected plants shall be removed from the field and buried outside the farm.
- ❖ No food items will be allowed in the processing facility to keep out.
- ❖ Facility will be cleaned regularly.
- ❖ For crawling insects- Sweep the facility daily and Air the facility when it has been dormant
- ❖ To keep out flying insect there will be use of netting on windows.

2.1.6 Crop rotation

- ❖ Farmers shall practice crop rotation. After harvesting of cassava roots, the farmers need to grow other crops or leave the land fallow for at least 3 years before planting cassava again.
- ❖ Rotation is necessary to reduce incidence of pest and disease build-up and helps the soil regain its fertility.
- ❖ During the period of one rotation, crops like maize, sorghum, yam, bambara beans, cow pea, groundnuts and other crops should be grown – before or after organic cassava.
- ❖ All crops included in the rotation must be treated as organic.

2.1.7 Harvesting instructions

- ❖ Harvest shall only be made from the group members' organically registered and certified farms.

- ❖ Before farmers harvest, they should liaise with their Community Internal Supervisor on the appropriate time for harvesting.
- ❖ The Harvesting section in the Record Book shall be filled the same day harvesting is done
- ❖ Farmers are to ensure there is no comingling of certified and uncertified produce.
- ❖ Harvested crops should be processed as soon as possible per the specifications of the buyer at the time of harvest and dried accordingly.

2.1.8 Drying Instructions

- ❖ Farmer should ensure that harvested crops are secured from contamination.
- ❖ Harvested crops should be dried on a platform raised either at the farm or the house (on condition that they will not be contaminated by animals)
- ❖ Harvest crops should be prepared according to the buyer's specification and dried immediately.
- ❖ Farmers must use drying mats and tarpaulin to protect the produce where necessary.

2.2 Internal Standard

To be able to sell organic quality material, all farmers must:

Production Level:

- ❖ Be registered and have a unique code with OM4D MOLE project
- ❖ Sign a contract with OM4D MOLE project.
- ❖ Cultivate on land free of any chemical such as synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, etc.
- ❖ Not use chemicals but rather use organic input
- ❖ Use untreated planting material/seed
- ❖ Use cover crop, preferably legumes to control weeds
- ❖ Adopt good agricultural practices such as crop rotation, manual weeding preferably hoeing, mulching etc.
- ❖ Not burn plant or crop residues
- ❖ Control erosion in fields
- ❖ Receive training together with their household and knowledge acquired must be transferred to hired labour
- ❖ Adopt good environmental and basic conservation practices e.g. no hunting
- ❖ Keep the area clear of non-degradable wastes such as plastic bags, metal cans etc.
- ❖ Keep simple good records/documentation for evidence
- ❖ Send their children to school

Processing Level:

- ❖ Only harvest cassava from areas that are demarcated by OM4D as organic certified field; on land free of any chemical such as synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, etc.
- ❖ Process cassava soon after harvesting (not more than 48 hours)
- ❖ Use clean tools, hands and water during processing to avoid contamination

- ❖ Not handle organic and conventional (not certified organic) dry cassava at the same time
- ❖ Dry cassava on a clean mat away from the soil or bare ground
- ❖ Store cassava chips in uncontaminated bags or sacs supplied by OM4D.
- ❖ Not store cassava chips for more than 4-months
- ❖ Use clean materials for transporting (sack or basin) dry cassava chips to milling site

Milling Level:

The farmer, Miller and Marketing manager must;

- ❖ Avoid the mixture of unwanted materials in cassava chips e.g. stones, nylon fiber kerosene etc.
- ❖ Cassava chips should be kept away from bare floor possibly on pallets
- ❖ ensure that the milling place and machine should always be kept clean (machine can be used for maize milling during off season but well cleaned after used)
- ❖ Store cassava flour in uncontaminated bags or sacs supplied by OM4D.
- ❖ ensure products are bagged and labeled separately for each farmer

Record Keeping

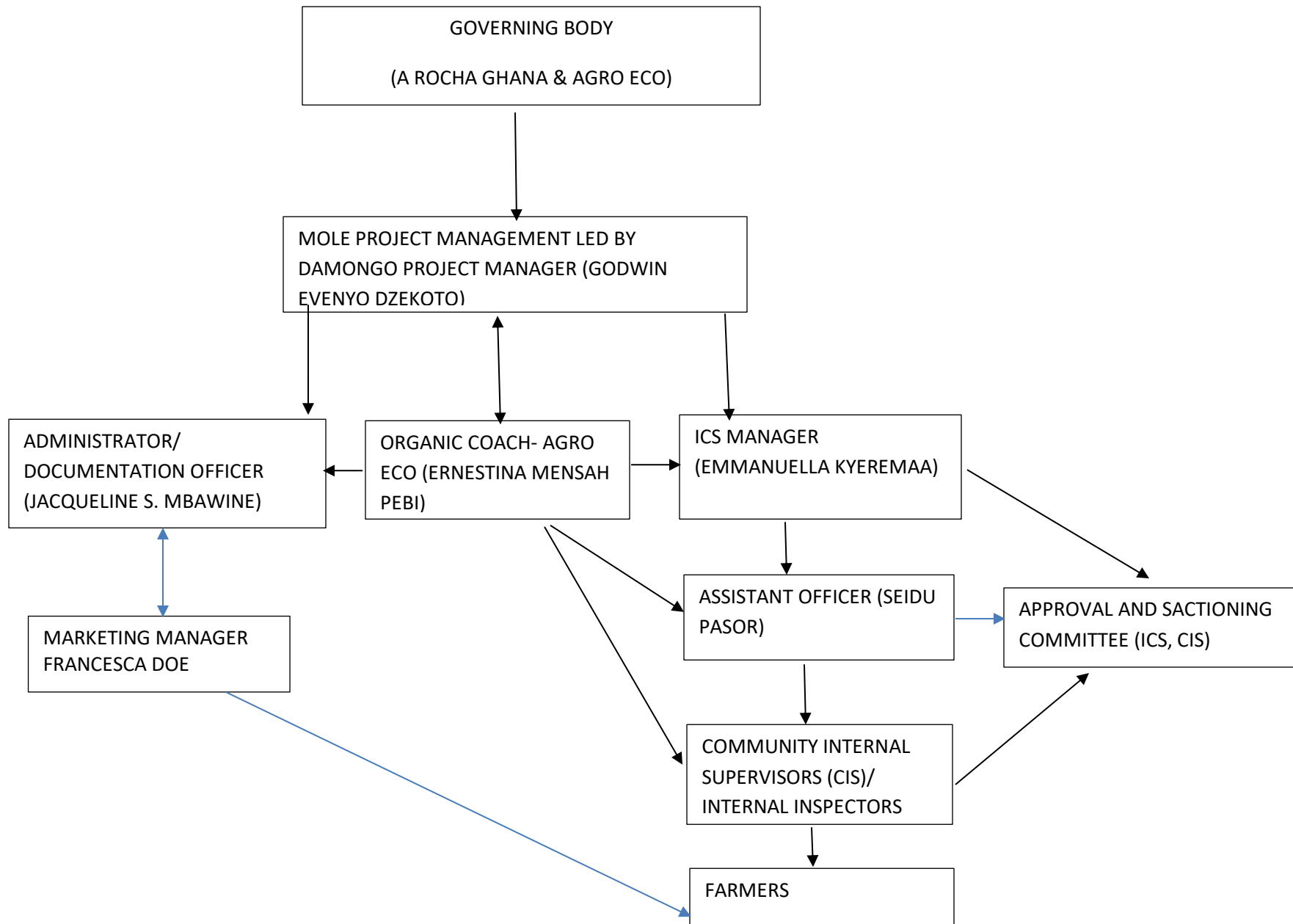
- ❖ Farmer identifies his product with the unique code ((Farmer ID)
- ❖ Product identification; all processed products (bags) must be well labeled
- ❖ Procurement officer keeps records of purchases and disbursement made
- ❖ Sales record kept by the farmer miller and procurement officer

Storage Level:

- ❖ No chemical for rodent control in the storage area (rather use traps)
- ❖ Regular cleaning of storage facility to prevent pest e.g. rat and mouse
- ❖ No fumigation
- ❖ Choose permanent, secure and good structure for storage i.e. no leaking roof
- ❖ No use of unprescribed bags
- ❖ Keep storage bags away from the ground, use pallets
- ❖ Good management practices
- ❖ Storage place should be kept clean always

3.0 ICS MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

3.1 Organogram for Mole Organic Landscape Enterprise (MOLE)



3.2 Description of Roles and Responsibilities of the ICS Team

GOVERNING BODY

A. Qualification

- Must be a director of the company you represent

B. Responsibilities

- Plays advisory role on the management of the enterprise
- Support in bringing on investors into the enterprise

Project Manager

A. Qualification

- Must have project management experience

A. Responsibilities

- Provides oversight responsibility in the management of the project
- Ensures that all activities are duly planned and executed

Organic Coach

A. Qualification:

- Should be very familiar with the EU and NOP regulations
- Should have good experience in organic agriculture and certification
- Should be able to train and prepare a group for certification

B. Responsibilities:

- Provides training to ICS manager on organic certification
- Provide guidance on how to prepare all necessary documentation for group to attain certification
- Provide training for Marketing Officer

ICS Manager

A. Qualification:

- Should have a good knowledge in organic certification and organic regulations
- Should have a good knowledge in organic cassava production
- Should have a good understanding of the internal organic standards of the group
- Should know the production areas of the group

B. Responsibilities:

- Together with the Organic Consultant, provides training in all aspects of organic certification and organic cassava production to the group
- Ensures that all training events are well documented
- Provides a planning schedule to produce yields all year round and monitor the implementation of the schedule together with the Community Internal Supervisors (CIS)
- Acts as the Documentation Officer for the group (until Documentation Officer has been recruited and trained)

- Ensures that all necessary documentation is in place to attain organic certification
- Ensure that all documents of the ICS including farm maps is up to date
- Ensures all traceability records are up to date
- Mediate and ensure all conflict issues are resolved
- Provides agricultural technical assistance to the group
- Ensure that contracts are signed between the MOLE project and each individual member

Assistant ICS Officer**A. Qualification**

- Must have field experience working with farming communities

B. Responsibilities

- Role will be to provide technical advice to the farmers on basic farming practices
- Plays a supervisory role during field visits/ monitoring of farmer in the organic scheme

Marketing Officer**A. Qualification:**

- Should have a good knowledge of organic certification
- Should understand the traceability system of the group
- Should have experience in post-harvest handling of cassava
- Should know the dos and don'ts of warehouse management

B. Responsibilities:

- Responsible for traceability at the warehouse during packaging
- Ensures that the right quality of produce is selected for packaging and export
- Ensures good sanitation at the milling and storage sites

Administrator/Documentation Officer**A. Qualification:**

- Should have a good understanding of the internal organic standards
- Should be familiar with all relevant documents of the ICS

B. Responsibilities

- Keeps up-to-date all ICS documents
- Liaises with the Approval and Sanctioning Committee to produce final approved list for external audit
- Keeps the Organic Certificate on behalf of the group

Community Internal Supervisor**A. Qualification:**

- Should be members of the CREMA
- Should have a good understanding of organic
- Should have good group formation and mobilization skills
- Should at least be to read and write

B. Responsibilities:

- Ensure that all farmers respect the internal organic standards of the group

- Support ICS Manager to ensure that group members are actively involved in all organic certification programmes (training, internal inspections, external audits)
- Call for regular group meetings to discuss issues pertaining to organic certification
- Assist the ICS Manager with all producer records at the farm level
- Help farmers to keep up-to-date records of their activity
- Coordinate the sales of produce

Internal Inspectors

A. Qualification:

- Should have a good understanding of organic certification and the internal organic standards
- Should have a general knowledge in organic cassava production
- Must be able to read and write
- Should have a good understanding of the internal inspection forms

B. Responsibilities:

- Sign conflict of interest declaration before conducting internal inspections
- Advise and correct for farmer to conform to organic principles
- Visits all farms of the farmer
- Inspects all parts of the farm
- Ensure that internal inspection report is appropriately filled
- Make follow-ups on corrective actions

Approval and Sanctioning Committee

A. Qualifications:

- Must be familiar with the internal organic standards
- Must be able to read and write

B. Responsibilities:

- **meet to review all internal inspection forms after inspection**
- Approves or sanctions members appropriately
- Communicates sanctions to farmers who violate the internal organic standards
- Gives the chance to disapproved farmers to appeal when needed
- Presents a final list of qualified farmers for external inspection

Members (Farmers)

A. Qualification:

- Should use new field have either an existing chemical free cassava field or be willing to clear new land for the purpose of planting cassava
- Must be willing to produce organically

B. Responsibility:

- Be available for training
- Respect the organic regulations
- Keep all production records up-to-date: Regularly fill the Planning & Record Book for each plot

- Make farm available for internal and external inspections
- Respect the terms of the agreement signed with the Association
- Respect all decisions made by the group
- Sell certified crops through the MOLE project

3.3 List of ICS Team members

3.3.1 Officers

S/N	NAME	POSITION	CONTACT
1	Godwin Evenyo Dzekoto	Project Manager	0246722625
2	Ernestina Mensah-Pebi	Organic Coach	0242966066
2	Emmanuella Kyeremaa	ICS Manager	0240499485
3	Seidu Pasor	Assistant ICS Officer	0543305555
4	Jacqueline S. Mbawine	Admin/Documentation Officer	0261077158
5	Francesca Doe	Marketing Officer	0501255997

3.3.2 Community Internal Supervisors/ Internal Inspectors

S/N	Name	Community	Contact
1	Samuel W. Moshie	Murugu	0207913007
2	Seidu Wahab	Murugu	0557300361
3	Abukari A. Aziz	Bawena	0556976294
4	Shaibu Iddrisu	Bawena	0542548126
5	Shaibu Mumin	Bawena	0552334083
6	Yakubu Issah	Kpulumbo	0549457336/0500443730
7	Jebuni Manan	Kpulumbo	0551056049

3.3.3 Approval and Sanction Committee

S/N	Name	Position	Contact
1	Emmanuella Kyeremaa	Chair	0240499485
2	Seidu Pasor	Member	0543305555
3	Samuel W. Moshie	Member	0207913007
4	Abukari A. Aziz	Member	0556976294

4.0 CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

4.1 Definitions

Farmer: Person who owns and/crops the land

Member: Person who has gone through all training, has been registered, internally inspected and has been approved for external organic certification becomes a member of the group.

4.2 New membership acceptance procedure

A person is accepted into the group as new member only after they have indicated their interest to the CIS, gone through training, registration, internal inspection and have been approved for external organic certification. Interested members have to indicate their interest and start the process at the beginning of the farming season so they can be adequately catered for in the course of the year.

4.3 Preparation for Certification

4.3.1 Registration

Farmers interested in the organic certification programme must be willing to register all their cassava fields under the organic programme. They must provide details of the farm (*see annex 6.1*). They must be willing to take part in all training programmes and avail themselves for inspections and field visits.

After the certification process has started, any farmer wishing to join will have to contact the Association executives or the ICS Manager. Following this, the farmer will be registered and sign a contract with the Association to permit a visit to the farm. Upon receipt of the forms, a file is created for the farm and the ICS Manager then follows up by visiting the farmer, interviewing him/her and observing his/her production practices to ascertain compliance with the organic internal standards.

4.3.2 Contract completion

Following voluntary registration, farmers complete and sign a contract with the Association committing them to the organic certification process. (*See annex 6.2*)

4.3.3 Risk assessment

A risk assessment will be conducted every year together with all Association members (*see annex 6.3*).

4.3.4 Farm mapping

All farms of the group will be GPS mapped to obtain actual farm sizes. Currently 100% of the farms are GPS mapped. A sketched over-view map of each of the communities is available showing farmer's field and their neighbors where available. A general over-view map showing

all communities and farms of the Association involved in the certification programme will also be made.

4.3.5 Training

ICS staff will be trained in Good Agricultural Practices and organic production standards. In preparing a selected farm for certification, the farmers are taken through training in certification and organic production principles. Training will be provided to groups of farmers by the Organic Coach, ICS Manager or any other personnel identified by the group.

All training events shall be recorded and centrally filed at the ICS office (*see Annex 6.6*). The central record must contain at least the topic of the training, date, place and list of trainees.

Reference to training documents, other training content, important outcomes etc. should be noted, too.

- ❖ All Internal Inspectors are trained at least once a year. The training shall include sample field inspections.
- ❖ Farmers are regularly trained on GAPs of organic production and on the regulations.

4.3.6 Internal inspection

Internal inspection is the annual assessment of individual producers to assessed for their level of compliance to the organic production practices (*see annex 6.4*). It is both on and off farm inspection using a prepared Internal Inspection guide. The internal inspection process also creates the opportunity for the producers to test their full understanding of certification principles and practices.

Internal Inspectors will:

- ❖ Meet the minimum qualifications stated in the section of responsibilities and qualifications of personnel.
- ❖ Not be the same person as the ICS Manager who controls and maintains the ICS of the group.
- ❖ Not inspect their own farms or the farms of relatives or close acquaintances.

The process is as follows:

- ❖ Each producer and the ICS will go through an internal inspection at least once a year.
- ❖ All Internal Inspectors must sign a Conflict of Interest Declaration with the ICS before performing internal inspections (*see Annex 6.5*).
- ❖ Internal Inspectors shall produce a report of the internal inspection. This report shall cover all producers who have undergone training in organic production.
- ❖ The Internal Inspection Checklist will be completed for each farm.

- ❖ Non-compliances and corrective actions identified will be recorded in the Internal Inspection Checklist.
- ❖ All internal inspections will be recorded on the Internal Inspection Schedule as a record of whose farm was inspected, where and when the inspection took place.
- ❖ Corrective actions will be reviewed after further internal inspections by the Approval and Sanctioning Committee.

Conflict of interest: The ICS Manager, Internal Inspectors and all members of the Approval and Sanctioning Committee under the ICS must sign a conflict of interest declaration. The ICS Manager is responsible for verifying that no conflict of interest occurs; i.e., that no tasks are assigned to persons who would have a conflict of interest for this activity (e.g. an Internal Inspector cannot inspect his/her farm or a family members' farms).

4.3.7 Approval

After the internal inspection, and subsequent internal inspections for non-compliances, the Approval and Sanction Committee will review the inspection reports and decide whether a producer is eligible for an external certification audit.

The ICS has a procedure in place to take decisions on approvals of producers who conform to the standards, and on sanctions imposed on producers where non-compliances were found. The committee will report the results of the internal inspection to the respective producers, the ICS office as well as the external certification body.

Approval of producers will take place after carefully reviewing the reports of the annual internal inspection. This will be done during a meeting of the Approval and Sanction Committee where committee members will determine objectively whether a producer was able to conduct corrective actions or not. If a producer was able to carry out the corrective actions related to him or her, then he/she is approved for external audit based on the decision of the committee. Decisions on approvals shall be communicated clearly to the producer and to the external certification body.

To avoid conflict interest, those members of the Approval and Sanctioning Committee who double as Internal Inspectors will not review the forms of the communities they inspected.

4.3.8 Sanctioning

During internal inspections, any failure noted as not complying with the internal standards will be treated as non-compliance. Failure to correct non-compliances may result in sanctions (*see annex 6.7*)

Sanctioning may also result from:

- ❖ Use of unapproved or prohibited chemicals for land clearing, weed control on farms, fertilization and or pest and disease control

- ❖ Burning of forest reserves or natural vegetation (setting the whole vegetative area ablaze) before planting
- ❖ Pollution of the environment and water bodies
- ❖ Mixing of certified and uncertified cassava from other conventional fields of friends, relatives or farmers' own undeclared farms
- ❖ Unavailability of farmer for internal inspections
- ❖ Failure to perform corrective actions after internal inspections
- ❖ Failure to attend trainings
- ❖ Refusal to sell organic cassava through the Association

All sanctions, subsequent corrective actions and decision-making processes will be recorded. Any suspension and cancellation issued by the Approval and Sanction Committee will be notified to the certification body.

Three types of sanctions will be applied to non-compliances and contractual issues. These are: Warning, Suspension and Dismissal.

Warning: Non-compliance of any issue of the internal organic standard or of contractual issues will lead to a warning. The maximum time allowed for correction will be determined by the Internal Inspector or ICS Officer and this will vary depending on the level of non-compliance. In the case where the warning remains unresolved by the end of the agreed period, suspension will be imposed.

Suspension: Suspension will be issued when a producer fails to show sufficient corrective action after a warning has been issued. The maximum period of suspension will depend on the nature of non-compliance. During the period of suspension, the producer will be prevented from using any type of document that has any relation to the organic certification programme and crops from suspended farmers will not be sold through the group as organic certified.

Dismissal: A member will be dismissed from the Association if it is found that there is clear evidence of the use of prohibited or synthetic chemicals on the organic farm and comingling of conventional cassava with the organic cassava.

However, if the farmer appeals and the ICS Manager decides that the farmer can still be part of the group, that farmer will have to participate in all group trainings and activities, desist from the use of all forms of synthetic chemicals, not plant treated planting materials for 3 years and not sell any crops from all farms or fields as organic for 3 years. This farmer will need to go through all annual internal inspections for 3 years and afterwards, the ICS Manager will further decide and approve the farmer or farms as organic certified. See annex for list of non-conformities and sanctions.

4.3.9 Appeal

Decisions on sanctions must be communicated clearly to the producer. When a producer is not happy with the decision of the Approval and Sanction Committee, he/she will seek redress through the ICS Manager.

Complaints Handling:

1. When the ICS Manager receives a complaint, the details of the complaint, causes of the problem and actions taken will be recorded appropriately.
2. The complaint will be identified as either coming from an Association member, Organic Coach, ICS Manager, buyer, Internal Inspector, etc.
3. The cause of the problem that led to the complaint will be investigated, and remedial actions will be taken.

4.3.10 External audit

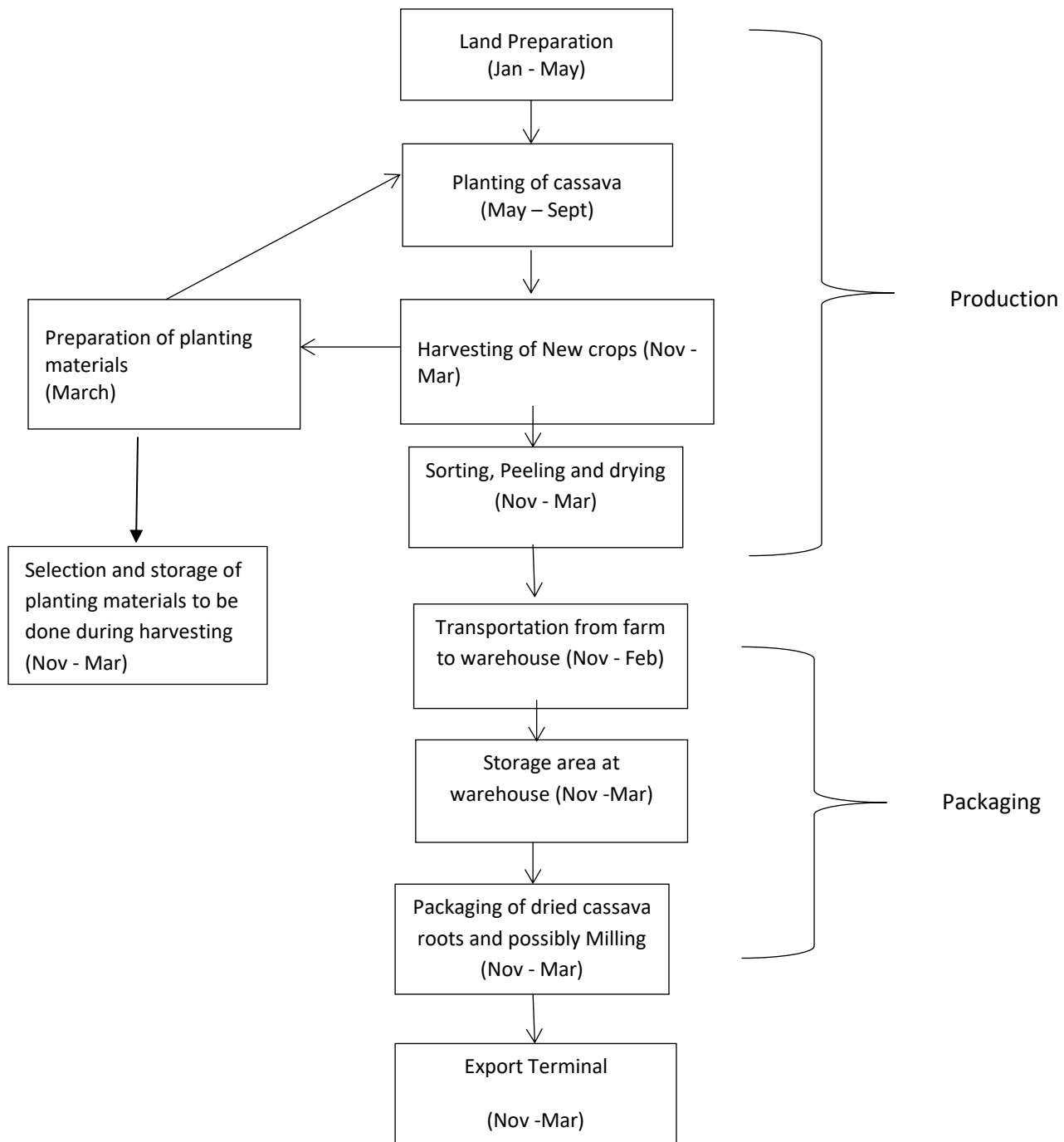
Following the annual internal inspection of all producers in the Association the external audit is carried out on a sample of producers and the group ICS by a formally-appointed and fully independent certification body (CB).

Prior to the external audit the following will be carried out:

- ❖ The ICS Manager will prepare a report of all activities completed annually (including training, internal inspections, corrective actions process). This document will not only be for presentation to the external auditors but also to serve as a solid base for continuous improvement of the quality system.
- ❖ A summary report of all the internal inspections will be prepared
- ❖ The ICS Manager will ensure that the Producer Planning & Record Keeping Books are up to date.
- ❖ The ICS Manager will ensure that centrally-kept ICS documents are up to date.
- ❖ The ICS Manager is responsible for presenting any information, documents, explanations, etc. that the external auditors may require to carry out the external audit.
- ❖ Following the external audit, there may be corrective actions to carry out. The ICS Manager is responsible for this process. Corrective actions will be carried out in the required period and the CB will be duly informed for verification.

5.0 PRODUCER IDENTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY

5.1 Product flow from field to port-MOLE PROJECT



5.2 Farmer Coding

Each farmer is identified with a unique code for identification and traceability purposes from farm to marketing. E.g. OCMU001- OC=Organic Crop; MU=Murugu Community; and digits represent farmer number.

Annex 6.2 FARMER CONTRACT OF THE MOLE ORGANIC LANDSCAPE ENTERPRISE (MOLE)

between

A Rocha Ghana

and

Farmer's name: _____ of farmer ID: _____

Located at: _____ community of _____ District of the Savannah
Region of Ghana.

This farmer grows organic produce with cassava as the main crop with sales to be facilitated by the Mole Ecological Landscape Enterprise (comprising of A Rocha Ghana and Agro Eco as partners)

Introduction

The Organic products within the MOLE project will be sold to both local and international buyers as deemed appropriate by the market prices. It should be noted that organic production does not only mean not use of non-organic chemicals. It also involves the basic principles and practices aimed at a sustainable production system based on ecological cycles and precaution. Key characteristics of a sustainable system are: relying on local and available resources. Maintaining the fertility of the soil with mulching, cover cropping and contours. Maximizing re-circulators of plant nutrients and organic matter. Maintaining genetic diversity in the production system as well as the agricultural landscape.

General clauses of the contract:

1. The farmer and MOLE project have come to an agreement that they will produce quality organic produce fit for the consumer at local and international levels.
2. All the parties involved agree to abide by the laws that govern organic agriculture as indicated in the introduction.
3. All crops **MUST** be grown without the use of synthetic chemical.
4. Where feasible, some trees should also be planted in the fields
5. Control of soil erosion should be done.
6. For pest management, farmers will only use concoctions made from neem and other recognized organic pest control systems.
7. In cases where pests invade their fields farmers will report immediately to the A Rocha Ghana's field officer

8. Farmers shall use manure from their own farms and cover crops for soil fertility.
9. Farmers must not use herbicide for weed control.
11. No synthetic materials or chemicals are allowed at the farm.
12. Farmers are encouraged to intercrop their fields, and should introduce fruits trees within their fields. At least every acre of land must have 10 trees.
13. Growing of leguminous trees is encouraged in the project.
14. Mulching and contours will reduce soil erosion.
15. Records of all farm operations must be kept up to date for not less than five years.

The farmer agrees:

- a. To allow inspectors from certification body to visit and inspect his/her farm any time they wish.
- b. To get advice on organic agriculture from the field staff and assigned MOFA extension officer.
- c. That she/he will not buy produce from other farmers and sell that produce to the MOLE project
- d. That she/he will grow and sell organic produce to the MOLE Project
- e. That the general clauses of the internal standards of MOLE will be complied

The company agrees:

- a. To train farmers where need arises and to organize for farmers study visits to other organic products in the country.
- b. To buy produce from the farmer depending on the quantity of export orders received.
- c. To pay farmers cash in time for quality produce they have supplied.
- d. Produce will be bought at an agreed price higher than the farm gate price. This increase in price is to help farmer manage his farm and aim at a sustainable production system based on ecological cycles.

Duration of this agreement:

- a. This contract must be respected all the time MOLE is certified organic.
- b. For all the time the farmer is selling produce to A Rocha Ghana

c. If the farmer fails to follow the procedures in this contract, A Rocha Ghana will have the right to stop buying from the farmer until the matter is resolved. And if the farmer is found using synthetic chemicals then this contract will be put on hold.

d. Any of the parties can terminate this agreement by informing the concerned party 4 months in advance.

Farmer's name.....	A Rocha Ghana
Signature/Thumbprint	Project Officer Name
Place/date	Signature/Thumbprint
	Place/date
Witness name.....	
Signature/Thumbprint	
Place/date	

Annex 6.3 Risk Assessment Template

Risk	Level			Mitigation Strategy	Responsible Persons/Entity	Timeline	Remarks
	Low	Medium	High				
Selection of farmers and communities; Willingness and commitment of famers; the risk is that selected beneficiaries may backout later or will not be serious with the program which might affect the output expected from that community. Also, some farmers may not want to comply with the organic rules as trained putting the product quality in question.							
Use of chemicals; The risk of a farmer using chemical on farm secretly or might have used it on the field less than 3 years ago and will still cultivate the cassava on the same field is there. On the other hand, if a farmer mixed crop cassava with other crop, the temptation to spray other crops might be a risk.							
Lack of portable water; Good clean water to wash hands before handling processing and milling etc.							

this will compromise food safety or quality. Additionally, lack of portable water for the farmer to drink can cause health issues which at the long round can affect production efficiency of the farmer or contaminate the product as well (e.g. cholera outbreak)							
Availability of sack to convey cassava chip to mill; if sacks using to convey chip for milling is the same one using for conveying other farm product, there will be high possibility that the cassava chip will be contaminated.							
Good agricultural practices; as a threat due to some traditional practices such as the burning etc.							
Input provision from other supporting partners/ organizations							
Presence of conventional farmers; such as the agrochemical seller in the communities							

Side selling due to higher price elsewhere; Also, delay in payment after selling organic product and accepting loans from others.							
Government intervention such as 1 district 1 factory project							
Low literacy rate in the communities;							
Records keeping at community level							
Buyers commitment; good price for product and fulfilling buying commitment							

Annex 6.4 INTERNAL INSPECTION FORM- MOLE ORGANIC LANDSCAPE ENTERPRISE
ORGANIC CERTIFICATION – 2019 – 2021 CROPS

Date of Inspection: Name of Community:

Name of Inspector: Duration: Start Stop

1.0	Farmer and plot information				
	First name:		Surname:	Farmer Code:	
	Number of plots:		Cassava Variety	Crops on the field Main crop: Other crops:	
	Total farm size (acres):		Farm size to be certified (acres):		
	Plot number	Plot size (acres)	Area planted (acres)	Expected yield (bags – kg)	Date planted
	Plot 01				
	Plot 02				

	Plot 03					
	Plot 04					
Standard Compliance						
N/O	Criteria	Compliance				
		Yes	Partly	No	N/A	Comment
2.0	Planting Material					
2.1	Where does farmer source planting material (seeds, sticks, etc.)	Self, market, other farmer, other source:				
3.0	Buffer					
3.1	What crops do the farmer's neighbors grow?					
3.2	Do farmer's neighbors spray or use chemicals in their farms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.3	Is there a chance of contamination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.4	What is done to avoid the contamination.					
4.0	Rotation					

4.1	Does the farmer know about rotation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.2	Describe your rotation (farmer mentions which crops follow in the rotation)					
4.3	Does the farmer practice the rotation (not applicable in year one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.4	Does the farmer need improvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.0	Intercropping					
5.1	Is there inter cropping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.2	What are these crops					
5.3	Is cassava planted on the boundary or on full field	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boundary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full field	
6.0	Weed					
6.1	Are weeds under control on the farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6.2	Does the farmer use herbicide in clearing weeds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6.3	Are there signs of herbicides application?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6.4	Has the farmer ever used herbicides in his life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6.5	Has herbicides been used in the last three years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6.6	Does the farmer know he is not allowed to use herbicides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6.7	Does the farmer need improvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7.0	Pest and Disease					
7.1	Are there signs of pest infestation on the farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7.2	How is pest controlled/ managed by farmer?					
7.3	Are there signs of disease on the farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7.4	How does the farmer control/manage diseases on the farm?					
7.5	Does the farmer use diseased planting materials (inspector observes the field)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.0	Fertilizer					
8.1	Does farmer use fertilizer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.2	On which crop(s) is the synthetic fertilizer used					
8.3	Does the neighbor use fertilizer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.4	Can the farmer mention any organic fertilizer he/she knows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9.0	General Assessment of Crop performance					
9.1	Is the crop growth up to expectation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10.0	Processing					

10.1	Where does the farmer dry the cassava				
10.2	Is there risk of contamination to the cassava during drying?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.3	What does the farmer use to carry the dried cassava to the house and processing site (means of transport and container)				
10.4	Is there a risk of contamination through transportation or container use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.0	Storage				
11.1	What material does the farmer use storing the produce				
11.2	Is the material clean and free from contamination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.3	Where does the farmer keep the produce before selling				
11.4	Is the storage area free from contamination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Environmental management				
12.0	Clean Field				
12.1	Is there any waste on the field?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.2	What are the types of waste (inspector writes the types seen)				
12.3	Where does it come from?				

13.0	Waste Management				
13.1	How is waste disposed of? (tick)	Burning, burying, damping at refuse site, compost preparation, spreading on the farm			
13.2	Is waste properly disposed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.3	Does the farmer need improvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.4	Is soil erosion a problem on this farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.5	Are there signs of erosion on the field? (inspector observes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.6	Are sufficient soil conservation measures taken? What else should be done?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.7	Does the farm activity contribute to water pollution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.8	Is burning used for clearing land?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.9	Have primary forest areas or other ecologically valuable areas been logged, burned or destroyed for organic production by this farmer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.10	If "yes", indicate area destroyed:..... acres				
14.0	Understanding of organic farming, participation in training				
14.1	Farmer understands basic principles and rules of organic farming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.2	The farmer has knowledge of organic farming techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14.3	The farmer takes part in group meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14.4	Can the farmer mention some of the trainings participated?	List topics:				
15.0	Records					
15.1	Does the farmer have any records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15.2	Farmer keeps up to date records of all production and sales of his farm produce.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15.3	What records are kept for or by the farmer? <input type="checkbox"/> production <input type="checkbox"/> sales <input type="checkbox"/> training <input type="checkbox"/> others					

Non-conformity Report

No.	Criteria	Expected Corrective Action	Expected date for correction	Follow-up (Done or Not)	Follow up by:

Recommendation by Internal Inspector

Compliance	Approve with conditions	Approve without conditions	Cannot be approve

Declaration

The farmer herewith confirms that he/she has been inspected based on the organic standards and has noted the set conditions.	
Signature Farmer:	Signature Internal Inspector:

Approval Decision by the Sanction Committee

Compliance this year	Approve with conditions	Approve without conditions	Cannot approve
Additional conditions or sanctions (give reasons why farmer should be sanctioned and how the sanction was chosen and update the sanction list):			
Signature ICS Officer:		Date:	

Annex 6.5 Conflict of Interest Declaration form

MOLE ORGANIC LANDSCAPE ENTERPRISE (MOLE)**Conflict of Interest Declaration Form**

(To be signed by Internal Inspectors and members of Approval and Sanctioning Committee)

I,.....

on this day.....make this conflict of interest declaration that,

I understand the roles and functions attached to this position,

I will not inspect/ approve my own farm or my close relatives' (parents, couple and siblings) farms, and

I will be sincere to the objective and purpose of the inspection for a good certification process.

Below are my close relatives whom I will not inspect/ approve their farms to avoid conflict of interest:

Name	Relation	Community

Position:.....

ICS Manager

Name:.....

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Date:.....

Annex 6.6 Training Records

TRAINING ACTIVITY RECORDS FOR MOLE ORGANIC LANDSCAPE ENTERPRISE (MOLE)

[illegible]

Annex 6.7 SANCTION PROCEDURES

S/N	NON-CONFORMITIES	SANCTIONS
1.	Use of unapproved or prohibited chemicals for land clearing, weed control on farms, fertilization and or pest and disease control	Farmer can be dismissed from the group. In case of appeal, farmer may be accepted back into group but must start from a conversion status (year 0 of the three-year conversion period, i.e. "C0").
2.	Burning of forest reserves or natural vegetation (setting the whole vegetative area ablaze) before planting	Warning for the first time and suspension when the action is repeated. Duration of suspension will be determined by ICS Manager. During the period of suspension, no organic cassava from the farmer will be sold through the group as certified. If this situation persists, the farmer will be removed from the group.
3.	Pollution of the environment and water bodies	Warning for the first time and suspension when the action is repeated. Duration of suspension will be determined by ICS manager. During the period of suspension, no organic cassava from the farmer will be sold through the group as certified.
4.	Mixing of certified and uncertified cassava from other conventional fields of friends, relatives or farmers' own undeclared farms	Suspension from group. Duration of suspension will be determined by the ICS officer. During the period of suspension, produce will not be sold as organic certified. The organic status of farmer will drop to the next lower level.
5.	Unavailability of farmer for internal inspections	Farmer will be removed from list of approved farmers. organic status will drop to the next lower status.
6.	Failure to perform corrective actions after internal inspections	Based on the ICS Manager's discretion, corrective action periods can be extended. Farmer will be warned or suspended from Association if agreed new dates for corrective actions are not met. This can further lead to dismissal from Association.
7.	Failure to attend trainings	Farmers who miss training sessions without permission from the ICS Manager will be warned in the first instance. In the event of subsequently missing

		training sessions, Suspensions will follow when truancy persist after warning. The ICS manager will determine the period of suspension and during this period, cassava from the farmer will not be sold through the Association as organic.
8.	Refusal to sell organic cassava through the Association	Farmer will be warned and if such actions persists, farmer will be dismissed from the Association.

Annex 6.8 Farm Records

Date	Name	Code	Activity	Person	Labour cost (GHS)	Quantity harvested (bag/kg)	Quantity sold(bag/kg)	Amount received (GHS)