



GREEN FOR CHANGE GHANA

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Foreword by the Executive Director

It is with immense gratitude and pride that I present the 2023 Annual Report of Green for Change Ghana (GCG). This report highlights our achievements, challenges, and key milestones over the past year as we continue our mission to foster sustainable environmental stewardship, climate resilience, and natural resource conservation in Ghana.

Green for Change Ghana was founded on the belief that communities are at the heart of sustainable development. As we celebrate yet another year of impactful work, we remain committed to empowering individuals and communities to take ownership of their environment while promoting practices that safeguard biodiversity and enhance livelihoods.

In 2023, we achieved notable progress across several key program areas. Through our self-funded Restoring Indigenous Tree Species (RITS) Project, we took proactive steps to combat the alarming deforestation in the Savannah ecological zone by planting over 5,000 native tree species. With the continued support of our partners and additional funding, we aim to expand this effort by planting 500,000 native tree species by 2026. This initiative not only restores degraded landscapes but also strengthens local communities' resilience to climate change and promotes sustainable agroforestry practices.

We successfully secured funding from the Fondation Audemars-Watkins (FAW) to implement our Addressing Behavioral Barriers Associated with Tree Planting (ABBAT) Project, which focuses on leveraging evidence-based behavior change strategies. Partnering with Ranas Ltd., we are utilizing the RANAS model to engage more than 1,500 beneficiaries in tree planting, nurturing, and protection. Through the integration of behavior change techniques into our interventions, we have made remarkable progress in improving tree survival rates, supporting sustainable landscapes, and strengthening community ownership.

Additionally, the USAID Feed the Future Ghana Trade and Investment (GTI)-funded initiative focused on building the capacity of smallholder cashew farmers in West Gonja Municipality. Training 300 farmers on harvest, post-harvest, and nut quality practices not only enhanced their knowledge but also positioned them to compete favorably in the market, boosting their incomes and livelihoods.

Throughout 2023, our work has been enriched by the unwavering dedication of our team, the wisdom of our board, and the support of our partners, funders, and stakeholders. Together, we have fostered innovation, embraced collaboration, and strengthened our impact in climate change mitigation, conservation agriculture, and environmental governance.

While we celebrate these successes, we recognize that the road ahead is not without challenges. Climate change continues to present profound threats, and resource conflicts remain an obstacle to sustainable development. However, these challenges also serve as a call to action, inspiring us to deepen our resolve and expand our partnerships to create a greener, more equitable future for all.

As we look to 2024 and beyond, we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Green for Change Ghana is committed to scaling our efforts, leveraging cutting-edge strategies, and driving meaningful change in the communities we serve. Together, we will continue to protect our environment, empower communities, and create a legacy of sustainability for generations to come.

On behalf of the entire Green for Change Ghana team, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all who have supported our mission. Your belief in our work fuels our passion and strengthens our resolve to achieve even greater milestones.

With gratitude and hope,

John Balankoo Sumbo
Executive Director
Green for Change Ghana

1.0. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Green for Change Ghana (GCG) is an environmental non-governmental organization committed to working with communities and initiating programs that benefit both communities and the environment. We discover and promote effective environmental practices and policies for the benefit of local communities and the planet. These include providing practical conservation interventions aimed at contributing to the sustainable management of important ecological habitats and strengthening the capacity of communities to be resilient and adapt to current trends in climate change and other environmental threats.

1.1. Legal Status

GCG is legally registered with the Registrar General Department in 2019 bearing the registration number CG123652019 and tax identification number C0030464005. The organization is also licensed by the non-profit organization Secretariat Ghana to operate as a national NGO with registration number DSW/9560.

1.2. Vision and mission

1.2.1. Vision

The vision of GCG is to see a world where local communities thrive in harmony with the planet through the discoveries and implementation of innovative environmental practices and policies.

1.2.2. Mission

GCG aims to tackle climate change, protect natural resources, and conserve ecosystems through community-focused initiatives, fostering a sustainable and resilient environment that empowers and benefits humanity.

1.3. Key Areas of GCG

As a conservation-oriented organization, we are committed to working with communities and initiating programs that benefit both communities and the environment. These include providing practical conservation interventions aimed at contributing to the sustainable management of important ecological habitats and strengthening the capacity of communities to be resilient and adapt to current trends in climate change and other environmental threats. Key areas of GCG work include:

- Habitat and Landscape Management and Restoration
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- Environmental Conservation Education and Advocacy
- Collaborative Natural Resource Governance
- Conservation Agriculture
- Natural Resources Conflict Management
- Green Value Chain Development, and
- Behaviour Change

1.4. Board of Management

The affairs of GCG are broadly managed by its board of directors. Apart from the board, GCG also has technical advisors that guide the team from time to time in taking forward the mission of GCG and the execution of action programmes.

2.0. ACTIVITIES ROUND UP

2.1. Addressing Behavioral Barriers Associated with Tree Planting (ABBAT) Project

Green for Change Ghana, in partnership with Ranas Ltd., is implementing the Addressing Behavioral Barriers Associated with Tree Planting (ABBAT) Project, a scientific landscape restoration initiative aimed at promoting effective tree planting, nurturing, and protection in communities around the Mole ecological landscape. The project focuses on using behavior change strategies to encourage more sustainable tree planting practices. As part of the project, 1,500 beneficiaries will each receive one-acre planting materials, including 40 seedlings, to establish agroforestry systems. Additionally, the project will integrate various behavior change techniques (BCTs) to enhance the effectiveness of tree planting efforts and improve survival rates. The project is funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Audemars Watkins Foundation (AWF) for the baseline and implementation phases, and Green for Change Ghana is currently seeking co-funding for the evaluation and scaling phases. The following activities have been carried out under the ABBAT project:

2.1.2. Baseline Questionnaire Development

The baseline questionnaire was developed for all the three (3) identified behaviours: tree planting, tree nurturing, and tree protection. The questionnaire was designed based on the structured RANAS model and tailored to meet the needs of the ABBAT project. The questionnaire was developed using kobo-collect application and bench test to ensure all identified issues were resolved before the enumerator training.

2.1.2. Enumerator Training

From January 11th to 13th, 2023, the ABBAT team held a three-day training program for 25 participants in Damongo, Savannah Region, Ghana, 30% more than the required number for the upcoming field data collection. The training aimed to familiarize participants with the survey tools, ensure consistency in data collection, and prepare the team for the baseline survey. It also covered the background of the ABBAT project, ethical considerations, and data collection protocols. During the training, participants learned key terms, which were translated into local languages, and a keyword dictionary was provided to ensure uniformity across the survey. Participants then took part in a pre-test of the survey instrument in two non-project communities to further familiarize themselves with the tools. The ABBAT team conducted both classroom and field tests, ranking participants based on performance. The top 15 were selected for the main data collection, with the remaining participants serving as backups.



Figure 1: Pictures of enumerators' training

2.1.3. Field Data Collection

Field data collection for the ABBAT project took place from January 19th to February 2nd, 2023. Three teams were formed, each representing a district: Sawla/Tuna/Kalba, West Gonja, and Wa East. Each team consisted of five enumerators and one field supervisor. Enumerators were tasked with administering 4-5 surveys per day, ensuring a minimum of 60 surveys submitted daily from each team, barring any unforeseen challenges. While the daily targets were generally met with strong supervision, smaller communities posed difficulties in reaching the targeted 40 households. In total, 802 households were interviewed across the three districts.

Table 1: Sample distribution

District	Number of enumerators	Number of communities	Number of HH interviewed
West Gonja	5	5	240
Sawla/Tuna/Kalba	5	6	362
Wa East	5	10	200
Total	15	21	802



Figure 2: Pictures of baseline field data collection

2.1.4. Finalize analysis of recollected data and design of behaviour change campaigns

In 2023, we completed the analysis of data from 802 interviewees, identifying key behavioral factors influencing tree planting, nurturing, and protection. These motivating and inhibiting factors were used to design targeted behavior change campaigns for each of the three behaviors. Three distinct campaign formats were developed to suit different intervention arms: (1) a standard intervention without a behavior change component, (2) a RANAS behavior change campaign, and (3) a RANAS campaign with community activation, where local leaders and CREMA members take a lead role in driving the campaign. Information and educational materials, including campaign instructions, training materials, and visual tools (e.g., image boxes, posters, flyers, picture stickers, and emotional cards), were developed to support the implementation of these campaigns across treatment and control groups.

2.1.5. Onboarding/orientation of newly recruited ABBAT Staff



An onboarding session was organized for three (3) project officers recruited to support the implementation of the ABBAT project in their respective districts. The orientation program which was held at the GCG Office in Damongo from 4th to 6th December 2023 and led by the Executive Director of Green for Change Ghana was to enable the newly recruited staff to better understand their role and increase their productivity and performance. The staff were taken through the background of the ABBAT project including the scope, goal, objectives, and the planned activities to be implemented. The orientation program also covered both the human resources and financial procedures of Green for Change

Ghana.

2.1.6. Training of promoters on community entry and sensitization campaign instructions

From 7th to 8th December 2023, a 2-day training session was organized for the 10 promoters on community entry and sensitization. The training which took place at the GCG Office in Damongo centred on community entry procedures, holding community-wide sensitization programs, and the targeting and registration of beneficiaries using the Kobo collect application. A standard guide/instruction on both community entry and sensitization was developed for the different intervention arms of the project to ensure consistency and standardization of the implementation of the activity by the field officers across both control and treatment communities.





2.1.7. Community entry, sensitization, and registration of participants

From December 14th to 28th, 2023, community entry and sensitization activities were conducted in both control and treatment communities. The primary aim was to inform stakeholders about the project's goals, objectives, and interventions, while gaining their support and cooperation for successful implementation. Led by 10 project promoters, the team registered 1,544 participants across three target districts, including 789 males and 755 females. Participants were briefed on the project's benefits, responsibilities, timeline, and potential challenges. They also expressed their preferences for tree species, with the most popular choices being Shea, Cashew, Mango, Teak, Mahogany, Moringa, Baobab, and Kapok. Based on these preferences, tree seedlings, including those donated by the Global Shea Alliance, will be organized and prepared for distribution in June 2024.



2.2. Restoring Indigenous Tree Species (RITS) Project

The Restoring Indigenous Tree Species (RITS) Project is Green for Change Ghana's flagship initiative aimed at combating deforestation and restoring degraded landscapes in Ghana's Savannah ecological zone. This region is facing an alarming decline in native tree species due to logging, agricultural expansion, and charcoal production. These trees, including Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), Kapok (*Ceiba pentandra*), Dawadawa (*Parkia biglobosa*), and Shea (*Vitellaria paradoxa*), are not only critical to the ecosystem but also provide significant economic, medicinal, and environmental benefits to local communities.

In 2023, Green for Change Ghana planted 2,562 native trees across six communities in the West Gonja Municipality using an agroforestry system and community-degraded lands. Tree species planted included Mango (*Mangifera indica*), Baobab, Kapok, and Cassia (*Cassia siamea*), which contribute to increased food security, income diversification, and resilience to climate change. The project incorporates advanced monitoring systems, including geotagging and photo documentation, to ensure proper tree planting, health, and survival.

Looking ahead, the RITS project aims to plant 500,000 native trees by 2026. This will include promoting Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) to identify and nurture 20,000 naturally growing young trees, particularly Shea, through grafting with improved scion materials. A community-based nursery in Damongo is already in place, but additional funding is needed to expand seedling production and scale up efforts. Green for Change Ghana seeks donor support to help achieve this ambitious goal, which will restore biodiversity, strengthen local livelihoods, and build climate resilience.

2.3. USAID Feed the Future Ghana Trade and Investment (GTI) Funded Project

In March 2023, Green for Change Ghana secured a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Feed the Future Ghana Trade and Investment (GTI) activity. The six-month initiative, titled "Building Capacity of Smallholder Cashew Farmers on Harvest and Post-Harvest Including Nut Quality," was implemented in the West Gonja Municipality in the Savannah region of Ghana. The primary goal was to enhance the knowledge of smallholder cashew farmers in the Municipality regarding harvest, post-harvest practices, and nut quality to enable them to produce high-quality nuts for the market.

Implemented in 10 communities, the project trained 300 cashew producers in silvicultural practices, with a focus on harvest and post-harvest techniques. The training modules covered optimal nut collection, harvest and post-harvest management, drying, storage, and determining nut quality parameters such as KOR, moisture content, defective rate, and nut count. Additionally, 30 lead farmers were selected from the group of 300 smallholder farmers and received extensive training to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge within the wider community. This approach ensured efficient and long-term knowledge transfer throughout the population, with community champions playing a crucial role in embedding these concepts across the community.

2.3.1. Kick-off Meeting

After the signing of the contract, a virtual kick-off meeting was organized on 9th March 2023 by the Ghana Trade and Investment (GTI) Activity team to discuss the Fixed Amount Award (FAA), the activities to be rolled out, and the requirements for both financial and technical reports. This was to ensure the project implementation team was on the same page and also clarify expectations ahead of the implementation of the project. The GTI team was led by the Grants and Subcontracts Manager, Jonathan Lamptey, and his assistant Abdul-Rashid Iddrisu while the Green for Change Ghana Team was led by John Balankoo Sumbo.

2.3.2. Stakeholder Engagement

Green for Change Ghana met with relevant stakeholders within the West Gonja Municipality to introduce the activities that will be implemented under the “Building Capacity of Smallholder Cashew Farmers on Harvest and Post-Harvest including Nut Quality” project. The stakeholders were excited to learn about the project and pledged their support for its smooth implementation. Among the stakeholders that were visited included the municipal department of agriculture, Fortune Aid, Buyanso Farms Ltd, A Rocha Ghana, and assembly members for Soalepe, Bonyanto, and Achubunyor.



Figure 3: Pictures of stakeholder engagement

2.3.3. Community Entry, Community Sensitization and Targeting and Selection of Beneficiaries

Green for Change Ghana in March 2023 conducted community entry processes in taking into consideration all protocols observed in Achubunyor, Soalpe, Jonokponto, Bunyanto, Taliorpe, and Busunu to introduce the project to community opinion leaders including chiefs, Tindana, assembly members, and relevant stakeholders to get their buy-in and support in the implementation of the USAID Feed the Future funded project. After the community entry, the project implementation team with the support of the community stakeholders in the entry processes, conducted community-wide sensitizations to acquaint the targeted communities with the project's goals, scope, and the planned activities that will be implemented under the project. The team after the community sensitization conducted the registration of interested farmers with the help of the Kobo collect electronic application tool, which gives real-time data and eliminates errors that would have occurred using the manual data collection method. Three Hundred and Thirty (330) interested cashew farmers across six (6) cashew production communities were registered using the Kobo tool.



Figure 4: Pictures of community sensitization on the GTI project

2.3.4. Stakeholder Workshop

Green for Change Ghana on Thursday, 6th April 2023 organized a stakeholder engagement workshop for key players in the cashew value in the West Gonja municipality under the “Building Capacity of Smallholder Cashew Farmers on Harvest and Post-Harvest including Nut Quality” project. The stakeholder engagement workshop was aimed at creating awareness of the project as well as highlighting the main activities and interventions to be implemented within the project zones of influence. Among the stakeholders in attendance included the municipal department of agriculture, Fortune Aid, Buyanso Farms Ltd, A Rocha Ghana, TreeAid Ghana, World Vision, and Assembly members for Soalepe, Bonyanto, and Achubunyor. The Director of Green for Change during his presentation stated that 88% of cashew was grown on smallholder farms, but the economic potential was not realized owing to low yield and a lack of knowledge of silvicultural and post-harvest methods. Farmers compete rather than collaborate to sell to intermediaries at the farm gate. He added to cashew farmers' problems by saying climate change cannot be ignored in cashew growing and so advised farmers to employ enhanced planting materials and embrace climate-smart complementary activities to preserve yields even in the face of climate change. He urged stakeholders to offer their advice, recommendations, and support to assist the initiative accomplish its aim of enhancing cashew nut quality in order to boost farmers' revenue.



Figure 5: Pictures of the stakeholder engagement workshop

2.3.5. Training of 300 cashew farmers on harvest and post-harvest management techniques

From May 16th to May 19th, 2023, Green for Change Ghana provided training to 300 smallholder cashew farmers across six communities in the West Gonja Municipality. The training aimed to enhance farmers' understanding of effective harvest and post-harvest management practices in cashew production. Led by four field officers, including two staff members and two Agricultural Extension Agents trained in the Training of Trainers program, the sessions covered essential topics such as plantation clearing, fire tracing, fruit collection, nut separation, drying, sorting, cooling, packaging, and storage of raw cashew nuts.

The training used adult-friendly methods like visual aids and hands-on demonstrations to encourage active learning and knowledge sharing. Feedback from beneficiaries highlighted the practical impact of the training. For example, Madam Abdular Afisah from the Soalpe Community appreciated the use of string twine for separating nuts, noting its cleanliness and quicker drying process, while Mbemah Haruna from Jonokponto Community found the recommended two-day harvesting interval more efficient than his previous weekly routine. Overall, the training equipped cashew farmers with valuable techniques to improve their post-harvest practices, enhance cashew quality, and support



Figure 6: Picture of harvest and post-harvest management techniques.

2.3.6. Training of 300 cashew farmers on cashew nut quality

Between June 5th and June 9th, 2023, Green for Change Ghana conducted training sessions for 304 cashew farmers in eleven beneficiary groups within the West Gonja Municipality. The primary goal was to enhance their knowledge and skills pertaining to cashew nut quality. Led by a team of four field officers, which included Green for Change staff and Agricultural Extension Agents, the training aimed to empower farmers in identifying and producing high-quality raw cashew nuts. Topics covered encompassed understanding moisture content, cashew nut count, defect identification (immature, mouldy, oil-stained, shrivelled, moth-eaten, and diseased nuts), and evaluating the quality of cashew kernels. Utilizing adult-friendly methods, such as visual aids, the training engaged farmers and encouraged the sharing of experiences, fostering cross-learning and a deeper understanding of cashew nut production. Feedback from beneficiaries underscored their appreciation for the potential of cashew plantations to enhance their livelihoods. Even initially skeptical farmers became enthusiastic advocates for quality cashew nuts. The training had a transformative impact, boosting the confidence and motivation of farmers, instilling hope for a better future. Ultimately, the training significantly elevated the understanding and skills of cashew farmers, leading to increased optimism and improved economic well-being, showcasing the transformative power of education and training in agriculture.



Figure 7: Pictures of cashew nut quality training

2.3.7. Training of 300 cashew farmers on negotiation, entrepreneurship, and access to improved markets

In August 2023, Green for Change Ghana organized impactful training sessions for eleven beneficiary groups in the West Gonja Municipality, targeting farmers in diverse communities. The goal was to equip them with essential skills for establishing successful cashew businesses, enhancing negotiation abilities, and effectively accessing markets. The training covered a wide range of subjects, including the fundamentals of entrepreneurship, the role of an entrepreneur, and key entrepreneurial principles. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their backgrounds as farmer entrepreneurs and address common challenges, fostering discussions on overcoming obstacles. Feedback from beneficiaries highlighted the positive impact of the training, with participants gaining a profound understanding of entrepreneurship concepts and challenges, fostering motivation, and a sense of ownership. The interactive learning environment, characterized by participatory group farmers discussions, promoted personal growth, empowerment, and knowledge exchange within the farming community. Mr. Ali Bani, a participant, stressed the importance of applying the acquired knowledge and encouraged fellow farmers to embrace courage, diligence, and openness in implementing these insights. He also urged them to welcome future training opportunities offered by Green for Change Ghana.



Figure 8: Pictures of negotiation, entrepreneurship, and access to improved markets training

2.3.8. Training of 30 lead farmers on best cashew production techniques

From August 24th to 25th, 2023, Green for Change Ghana organized an extensive training session for 30 lead cashew farmers representing 11 groups in the West Gonja Municipality. These groups, spanning various communities, consisted of 19 males and 11 females selected to share acquired knowledge with their respective communities. The training aimed to equip these farmers with essential skills and insights related

to optimal cashew production methods. Serving as a recap of previous sessions held over the past six months, it covered aspects of the cashew value chain. The two-day agenda included topics like plantation establishment, maintenance, weed control, pruning, agronomic practices, and fertilizer application. Practical field demonstrations provided participants with hands-on experience in planting distances, pruning, and weeding techniques. Utilizing a group discussion approach, the training fostered an engaging learning environment, encouraging participants to share experiences and collectively brainstorm solutions to challenges. This participatory method enhanced understanding and promoted mutual learning among the farmers. Feedback from beneficiaries highlighted the positive impact of the training, with lead farmers expressing newfound expertise in various aspects of cashew cultivation. They expressed readiness to implement best practices, praising the effectiveness of the "lead farmer approach" in disseminating knowledge. Group discussions were lauded for encouraging collaborative learning and problem-solving, fostering a supportive community of farmers.



Figure 9: Pictures of lead farmers training on best cashew production techniques

2.3.9. End of Activity Evaluation Workshop

A final evaluation meeting was held on the 26th of October 2023 at the Eco Club House in Damongo with a cross-section of participants including beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to share experiences and give suggestions for next steps and points to note. Participants drawn from organizations such as the District Department of Agriculture, Planning Unit, NGOs, private sector, GTI, the 10 beneficiary communities, etc. participated in the end-of-activity evaluation workshop. During the event, a brief presentation of the activities that were implemented under the different phases of the project was presented.



Figure 10: Pictures of End of Activity Evaluation Workshop

3.0. SUCCESS STORIES

3.1. A New Dawn of Hope: The Story of Madam Bani Wurche

Sixty-five-year-old Madam Bani Wurche, a smallholder farmer from the Achubunyor community, is a proud member of the Gurizange Cashew Farmers Group. Living with her husband and four other family members, Madam Bani has spent the last 20 years cultivating an 18-acre piece of land for subsistence farming. Eight acres of this land are dedicated to cashew cultivation, while the rest is used to grow food crops such as yam, maize, cassava, okra, pepper, cowpea, and millet.

Despite their dedication, Madam Bani and her family faced significant challenges in managing their cashew farm, often losing a substantial portion of their harvest each year. Poor farm sanitation and inadequate knowledge of proper harvesting and post-harvesting practices meant many cashew nuts went to waste, hidden under fallen leaves or germinating when the rains arrived.

Everything changed when Madam Bani received training through the Green for Change Ghana and GTI Feed the Future project. The training focused on harvest and post-harvest techniques, as well as cashew nut quality standards. For the first time, she learned the importance of proper orchard maintenance and farm sanitation, understanding how these practices could reduce losses and improve yields.

The training also introduced Madam Bani to the importance of drying cashew nuts under shade rather than in direct sunlight—a revelation that could save her family from rejected harvests due to poor nut quality. "This training I have received will go a long way to help me and my family increase our household income since my nuts will no longer be rejected by buyers anymore," she said with excitement.

Moreover, she gained knowledge about the different types of cashew nuts, such as oil-stained, diseased, spotted, rotten, or immature nuts—information she had never encountered before. "At first, I thought all cashew nuts were the same, just like shea nuts, but this training has opened my eyes," she shared.



Madam Bani expressed deep gratitude to Green for Change Ghana and GTI for their impactful intervention, which has not only enlightened her but also brought step-down training sessions directly to her community. Thanks to this initiative, she envisions a brighter future for her family, with improved harvests translating into better income and living standards.

For Madam Bani Wurche, this is not just a training—it is a new dawn of hope for her farm, her family, and her community.

3.2. Transforming Lives Through Knowledge: The Story of Mr. Mahama Abdulai

At 74 years old, Mr. Mahama Abdulai, a farmer from a household of 12, had spent decades cultivating crops to support his family. However, the idea of cashew farming had always seemed unappealing to him. Skeptical about its profitability and unfamiliar with the techniques required for success, he saw little reason to venture into cashew cultivation—until a transformative opportunity came his way.

Through the Green for Change Ghana and USAID project, Mr. Abdulai found himself at the forefront of change. Initially hesitant, he decided to plant a small cashew orchard and participate in the project's training programs. This decision would prove to be life-changing. The training sessions covered essential farm management practices, including fertilization, pruning, pest control, and proper farm sanitation—all tailored to improve cashew productivity and nut quality. For Mr. Abdulai, the knowledge gained during these sessions was eye-opening. He realized the untapped potential of cashew farming and how strategic management could turn it into a lucrative venture.

"I will implement these newfound farming practices to witness remarkable transformations in my cashew plantation," Mr. Abdulai said with determination. "The knowledge gained will not only help me improve my cashew productivity but also significantly enhance the quality of the cashew nuts produced."



Today, Mr. Abdulai is optimistic about the future. The intervention has not only changed his perspective but has also given him a renewed sense of purpose in farming. His gratitude toward Green for Change Ghana and USAID is profound, as he credits them for introducing him to practices that promise to uplift his household's income and livelihood.

As he looks ahead, Mr. Abdulai hopes that the project will continue beyond its current funding period to bring similar transformative impacts to other farmers in his community. For him, this intervention has turned skepticism into success and challenges into opportunities.

3.3. Empowering Farmers Through Knowledge: The Story of Mr. Joseph Nnibo

Fifty-five-year-old Mr. Joseph Nnibo, a dedicated smallholder farmer from Murugu who now resides in the quiet farming community of Bonyanto, has spent nearly two decades working his 20-acre land alongside his wife and eldest son. While much of their farming effort has been devoted to growing food crops such



as groundnuts, yams, beans, maize, and vegetables for subsistence, seven acres of their land are dedicated to cultivating cashews.

Despite his efforts, Mr. Nnibo faced significant challenges, particularly due to the lack of knowledge and training on proper harvest, post-harvest, and bushfire control techniques. Every dry season, fires would ravage cashew farms in his community, destroying yields and livelihoods. Although many farmers blamed the Fulani herders, Mr. Nnibo acknowledges that the community's lack of capacity-building support played a significant role in their struggles.

This narrative began to change when Mr. Nnibo joined the Kur-Ayuroto cashew farmers group under the Green for Change Ghana and GTI Feed the Future project, which aimed to enhance smallholder farmers' knowledge on cashew cultivation, harvest, and post-harvest practices. Through two comprehensive training sessions, Mr. Nnibo gained valuable insights into fire belt creation, proper drying techniques, and the importance of quality cashew nut packaging and storage.

"I now understand why buyers from Damongo often complained about my nuts and paid lower prices. I thought they were exploiting us, but I've learned that some of the fault lies with us," Mr. Nnibo said,

reflecting on his past practices. Previously, he feared drying cashew nuts might lead to significant weight loss in storage sacks, not realizing that improper drying affected nut quality.

Armed with this new knowledge, Mr. Nnibo confidently states, “Thanks to this training, I now know the quality parameters buyers are looking for and will do what is required of me to meet those standards.” He also appreciates the importance of creating fire belts around his farm, a preventive measure that will protect his crops from annual fires.

Expressing heartfelt gratitude on behalf of his community, Mr. Nnibo commended Green for Change Ghana and the GTI Feed the Future Project for bringing transformative training to his doorstep. He assured the team that he and his peers would implement the lessons learned and hopes for occasional follow-up visits to monitor their progress.

Mr. Nnibo’s story is a testament to the power of knowledge in transforming lives and empowering farmers to overcome challenges while improving their livelihoods.

3.4. Breaking Misconceptions: The Story of Madam Bimata Seidu



At 72 years old, Madam Bimata Seidu has spent much of her life farming cashews alongside her household of 11 members. Like many in her community, she believed that visually appealing cashew nuts were automatically of high quality, a misconception that shaped her farming and business practices for years. Confident in her assumptions, she often dismissed buyers’ feedback and suspected them of dishonesty when they questioned the quality of her nuts.

That perspective changed when Madam Bimata attended a transformative training session organized by *Green for Change Ghana* under the *USAID Feed the Future Project*. The

training shattered her long-held beliefs, revealing the critical parameters used to determine cashew nut quality beyond just appearances.

For Madam Bimata, this knowledge was a game-changer. “Most buyers, particularly Olam Ghana, buy cashew based on specific quality parameters. Thanks to this training, I now understand what they look for and will ensure that the nuts I produce meet these standards for maximum gains,” she said with determination.

In addition to learning about nut quality assessment, the training emphasized the importance of proper hygiene practices in cashew farming. Inspired by these insights, Madam Bimata pledged to implement hygienic measures on her farm to enhance her crop yield and quality. She was confident that adopting these techniques would result in a more productive and bountiful harvest in the coming season.

This shift in perspective has empowered Madam Bimata to approach her farming with newfound confidence and precision. Armed with knowledge, she no longer fears being misled by buyers and now sees opportunities to secure better business deals through the quality of her produce.

Expressing her gratitude, Madam Bimata stated, “This training has opened my eyes and equipped me with the skills to distinguish between good and subpar nuts. I now know the importance of proper farm hygiene and quality standards in producing market-ready cashews.”

Her story is a testament to how access to knowledge and training can transform livelihoods, dispel misconceptions, and create pathways to economic empowerment. Madam Bimata’s journey of learning and growth highlights the significant impact of programs like *Green for Change Ghana* and *USAID Feed the Future Project* in rural farming communities.

4.0. CONCLUSION

Green for Change Ghana remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and community empowerment. Through collaborative efforts and innovative solutions, we continue to make a lasting impact on ecosystems and livelihoods across Ghana. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and communities for their unwavering support.