

This report summarizes my trip to Ghana to collect data for my master thesis on the topic ***Evaluation of the program 'Planting for Food and Jobs' in the Northern region of Ghana.*** My trip was most satisfying and gratifying especially upon seeing my mother, girlfriend, sisters, my extended family and friends. Although these were not the main reason of my trip, they made my stay worthwhile. There is general peace and tranquillity, thus besides the economic hardships the overall politic, freedom and all is still good before I left.

I met with as planned before leaving Mr. Daniel Debrah (Forest Aid Ghana), Madam Nafisah Akudbillah (GIZ, Ghana) and a couple of meetings with officers of the Ministry of Foods and Agriculture. They led me to meet the then Northern Regional Director of Food and Agriculture, Mr. Boakye-Acheampong and his officers who were very supportive. I had somehow semi-structured interviews with them, these gave me a better understanding of agriculture in the region, the program and they led me to more people who also helpful. Dr. Antwi of the Regional Department of Agriculture-Tamale directed me to the Tamale metro Director of the Department of Food and Agriculture, Mr. Adama and his team. The Regional department is plays a supervisory role in the region coordinating 26 districts while Tamale metro department undertakes the real implementation within the metropolis. I was able to select the farmers with Mr. Alhassan, the MIS Officer at the Tamale metro and also in charge of the PFJ.

I also met with Mr. Bawuah (Catholic Relief Service), Mr. Duhbai (Oxfam) and Dr. Asare-Kyei (Esoko). I could not visit all the districts within the region due to my limited financial resources; I had to restructure to administer questionnaires to farmers within farming communities in the Tamale metropolis and the North Gonja district. I down with a fever and for almost a week I could not do anything with respect to my work. Regardless of these challenges, I was however able to successfully administer the questionnaires. One shocking revelation was out of the 80 farmers; one farmer could complete the questionnaire alone by himself. Almost all the farmers have not had any form of formal education, and this was so below my expectations. I met Agricultural extension agents (AEAs) at the Tamale metro department who served as interpreters for my data collection.

During my data collection, which had been my first time of visiting a farm yard gave me the opportunity to participate in on-field farming activities. I contributed in preparing rice seeds for planting, planted rice and assisted in laying roles along which to plant the rice seeds. Even though short, these have given me practical experience into agriculture in my country and a great satisfaction with my little involvement. I also participated in the trainings of AEAs, farmers and tractor operators; these also deepen my understanding of agriculture and the players within the sector. Through all these, I have learned to develop my communication, team playing, task prioritising and time management skills. I also asked these persons I met to aid in my job hunt as most of them are willing to use their networks to assist me acquire one whenever the opportunity comes.

These few years in Germany and the modules I have been taught have enlightened me with a lot of knowledge which I think can help my country as a whole and the agriculture

specifically. The knowledge of government institutions functioning efficient and effective has enormous returns on the sector as well as ripple effects on other sectors and the overall economy. State institutions such as the regional and metro department play essential roles in agriculture in the region. I realised most farmers cultivate individually and there is no form of team work and/or cooperation among them. As a result, they cannot tap into the benefits of economies of scale as they are not collectively. I also do think the farmers in the region should concentrate more on the cultivation of crops they have comparative advantage in, come together with other farmers and they would be amazed at their returns.

These areas will be my focus in my job search; this is the means through which I hope I can make meaningful impact on the agricultural sector in my country and Ghana itself. This trip has been very useful not just for my thesis but also the understanding and knowledge I have gained, catching up with my loved ones and meeting new persons to broaden my networks. Next time, I would seek financial support before making any clear cut plans. I really do thank STUBE Hessen for your assistance and communication throughout the whole process. If possible I would rate your assistance a 1000%.

Danke Schön!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Agyemang-Prempeh'.

Agyemang-Prempeh, Michael