


Effective Aid for Small Farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa: Southern Civil Society Perspectives



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GHANA CASE STUDY

FOREWORD

This study of food security and agriculture development in Ghana and two accompanying studies for Mozambique and Ethiopia were commissioned by the Canadian Food Security Policy Group in the second half of 2006 as a way of giving voice to civil society organizations concerned with agricultural development in these CIDA-priority countries. The civil society organizations consulted were intended to be representational but, obviously, not comprehensive.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and/or the civil society organizations consulted and may or may not reflect the specific views of all of the members of the Canadian Food Security Policy Group or the views of the University of Development Studies.

**The excellent review of the draft report by Diana McLean is acknowledged. Some of the issues she raised could not however be addressed here.*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACDEP	Association of Church Development Projects
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
ARI	Animal Research Institute
CBO	Community Based Organization
CIFS	Community-driven Initiatives for Food Security
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
DDO	Diocesan Development Office
DISCAP	District Capacity Building Program
DWAP	District-Wide Assistance Program
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FABS	Food and Agriculture Budgetary Support
FARMER	Farmer-Responsive Mechanisms in Extension and Research
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy
FBO	Farmer-Based Organization
FSEF	Food Security and Environmental Facility
GDCP	Ghana-Danish Cooperation Project
GEMP	Ghana Environmental Management Project
GIDA	Ghana Irrigation Development Authority
GTZ	German Technical Development Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LACOSREP	Land Conservation and Smallholder Rehabilitation Project
LAP	Land Administration Project
LRDP	Lowland Rice Development Project (An AFD/MOFA Project)
MDBS	Multi-Donor Budgetary Support
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
OIC	Opportunities Industrialization Centers
SARI	Savanna Agriculture Research Institute
SFMC	Savanna Farmers' Marketing Company
UDS	University for Development Studies
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UWADEP	Upper West Agricultural Development Project
WVI	World Vision International

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Canadian Government, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has been assisting various development activities in Ghana for quite a long time. The most notable assistance to date has been the provision of potable water through boreholes in the Upper West and Upper East Regions. CIDA has also been involved in food security programming in Ghana with particular emphasis on the three northern regions of Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions (northern Ghana). The three regions are the poorest and most food insecure areas of Ghana due to several historical, climatic, agricultural, political, policy (or lack of it) and other factors. Attempts at tackling the food insecurity problem of northern Ghana in particular, and Ghana as a whole, by governmental agencies such as the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) and several local, national and international organizations, including CIDA, has resulted in only modest achievements.

The questions that arise are:

1. What are all these agencies doing right and what are they doing wrong?
2. How much have they learnt over time and why does it seem difficult to right the wrongs?
3. Do the development agencies believe that small farmer development is key to ensuring food security in Ghana?
4. Have these agencies got priorities for small farmer development right?
5. How should food security programming be redone to ensure significant success?

It is these questions and others that prompted the need to research into local civil society views on agricultural development priorities in Ghana and other countries in Africa.

I.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STUDY

The following are the terms of reference for the study:

1. Determine which civil society organizations (national, regional or international) or national networks have interest and expertise in small farmer agricultural development in the country.
2. Contact as many of these organizations as possible to obtain an overview of their analysis of **small farmer agricultural development priorities**. National network perspectives, if they exist, are of particular relevance.
3. Prepare a report summarizing these agricultural development priorities taking particular note of the areas of consensus and of disagreement. A 'top-ten' list of small farmer agricultural development priorities with brief rationale would be ideal.
4. Prepare a brief commentary on the current CIDA-supported agricultural development activities in light of this report.

Note: As part of Task 4, contact the CIDA official responsible for agricultural programming in Ghana. This contact could be made by either the Consultant or one of the local staff of the participating Food Security Policy Group member agencies.

The following are the deliverables:

1. The list of civil society organizations from (1) above along with the names of contact persons.
2. A report of 10-20 pages from (3) above.
3. A commentary on the CIDA-supported agricultural development activities (2-4 pages)

The tasks should be completed by 15th September 2006.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The research involved capturing the opinions of people from diverse areas of endeavour but people who have considerable experience in agriculture and food security issues at the local level. Thus, the civil society organizations included in the sample were purposively selected but with diversity in mind. The selected organizations were from the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions of the country.

Discussions were held with individuals in some cases and groups of two to four in other cases. Participants in the discussions were also asked to complete a simple questionnaire (see appendix 1), which captured most of what was discussed and even more. The respondents filled the questionnaire over a period of one day to one week, thus they had time to think more critically about the questions and the discussions.

The methodology did not aim at obtaining information by gender even though one expected those who responded to mention gender differences if they found the issues being discussed warranted it. Heads or designated persons of civil society organizations responded to the questionnaire. Most of those are well-informed people and very gender aware. The responses from the three women were not markedly different from those of the men. In terms of implementation of programmes to address food insecurity there will be very many gender issues and considerations to be taken into account.

Information on CIDA Food Security Programming was obtained from documents at the CIDA-PSU office in Tamale.

Names of the organizations contacted for the required information and contact persons are as given in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1: Local agricultural agencies (civil society organizations, groups and individuals) consulted and contact persons in the Upper West Region

Organization or group	Contact person (s)
1. Nandom Agricultural Project (NAP) (A Catholic Church NGO)	Mr. Stan Nasaal
2. Nandom Farmers' Cooperative Society (A local farmers group)	Mr. Dominic B. Ziniyel Mr. Augustine Yirideme
3. District Directorate of Agriculture (MoFA). Jirapa/Lambussie District	Dr. Stephen Degbor Mr. George Asaaseba
4. District Directorate of Agriculture (MoFA). Nadowli District	Mr. James Konigeni Mr. Roland Aboyinga
5. TechnoServe (An international NGO)	Mr. Stephen Mwinkaara
6. A Farmer in Wa	Mr. Gordon Tuu

Table 2: Local agricultural agencies (civil society organizations, groups and individuals) consulted and contact persons in the Upper East Region

Organization or group	Contact person (s)
1. Presbyterian Agricultural Station, Garu (A Presbyterian Church NGO). Area of operation covers Bawku Municipal and Garu-Tempene Districts	Mr. Solomon Atiga
2. TRAX Support Programme, an agricultural (soil and water management) NGO. Headquarters in Bolgatanga. Area of operation covers Upper East and parts of Northern Region	Mr. Raymond Darku
3. District Directorate of Agriculture (MoFA). Bongo District	Mr. Francis Dery
4. Centre for Sustainable Development Initiatives (CENSUDI), a gender-oriented development NGO with headquarters in Bolgatanga	Ms Francisca Issaka
5. TechnoServe (An international NGO), Bolgatanga	Mr. Adom
6. Action Aid, (An international NGO), Zebilla	Ms Christiana
7. Community Relations and Outreach Programme, University for Development Studies, Navrongo Campus	Dr. Francis Bacho
8. Savanna Agricultural Research Institute, Manga-Bawku	Dr. Bomber Tanzubil (now Principal of Bolgatanga Polytechnic)

Table 3: Local agricultural agencies (civil society organizations, groups and individuals) consulted and contact persons in the Northern Region

Organization or group	Contact person (s)
1. Association of Church Development Projects (ACDEP)	Mr. Malex Alebikiya Mr. Chrys Anab
2. Savanna Farmers' Marketing Company Ltd. (SFMC). A limited liability company for the marketing of agric produce based in Tamale	Mrs. Janet Chigabatia-Adama Mr. Ties Kroezen
3. Regional Directorate of Agriculture (MoFA). Northern Region	Mr. Sylvester Adongo
4. Yendi E.P. Church Agricultural Station	Mr. Joshua Nyaaba
5. Amasachina Self-Help Association (A local development NGO), with HQ in Tamale	Alhaji Issah Salifu
6. Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC), (an international NGO), Tamale.	Mr. Ben Anamoh
7. SNV (an international NGO), Tamale	Mr. Chris Bakawere
8. Care International (An international NGO)	Mr. David Sumbo
9. NewEnergy (A national NGO), Tamale	Mr. Imoro Sayibu
10. Savanna Agricultural Research Institute Nyankpala	Dr. Clottey Dr. Mathias Fosu
11. Faculty of Agriculture, University for Development Studies, Nyankpala Campus	Dr. Thomas Bayorbor Dr. Joshua Yidana
12. Animal Research Institute, Nyankpala	Dr. N. Karbo

2. SUMMARY OF THE CSO PERSPECTIVES ON SMALL FARMERS' DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES IN GHANA

2.1 MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES

Analyses of the information collected give considerable indications with regards the most important priorities in small farmer development in Ghana and why the respondents believe those are important priorities. Respondents were asked to state the five most important priorities in small farmer development in Ghana and give reasons.

Table 4: Most important priorities in small farmer development in Ghana, with particular reference to northern Ghana, as perceived by personnel of civil organizations and individuals in Northern Ghana.

Table 4. Civil Society Ranking of Priorities for Small Farmer Development

Most Important Priority	Frequency (n=31)	Percentage frequency
1. Promotion of small scale irrigated agriculture	15	48.4
2. Credit to farmers (for inputs and machinery and inventory credit) and improvements in credit management	16	51.6
3. Development (intensification) of small ruminant production	6	19.4
4. Basic formal education of the farming population	2	6.5
5. Promotion of agricultural product marketing (including pricing and value addition to extend shelf-life)	12	38.7
6. Development of strong farmer based organizations (to develop into viable cooperatives)	15	48.4
7. Provision of appropriate technology to reduce drudgery/Promotion of animal traction	10	32.3
8. Promotion of agriculture as a business (enterprise development)	4	12.9
9. Strengthening of extension at district levels through MoFA and NGOs/upscaling of best practices/ensuring uptake or adoption of improved technologies	14	45.2

10. Development of fruit crop plantations e.g. Mango	1	3.2
11. Provision of adequate and timely production inputs to farmers	6	19.4
12. Improvement in infrastructure; roads, schools, health facilities etc.	3	9.7
13. Formalizing and developing farm-based education	1	3.2
14. Introduction (reintroduction) of subsidies for essential farm inputs/services	5	16.1
15. A long-term strategic decentralized small-farmer development policy and programmes	3	9.7
16. Policy and political recognition of food crop production	2	6.5
17. Development and promotion of Africa regional commodity markets	2	6.5
18. Community empowerment through capacity building and setting up viable local structures	3	9.7
19. Intensification of soil fertility management technologies for small farmers (LEISA technologies)/ Sustainable land management practices	8	25.8
20. Farm based research (Action research with farmers) (Ensuring strong practical research-extension-farmer linkages)	5	16.1
21. Improved coordination of small farmer development efforts among development actors under a common development framework	2	6.5
22. Encouragement of larger farm sizes/promotion of medium to large scale farm sizes	2	6.5

From the above results, the twelve “topmost” small farmer development priorities (in descending ranking) according to civil society are:

1. Credit to farmers (51.6%)
2. Promotion of small scale irrigated agriculture (48.4%)
3. Development of strong farmer-based organizations (FBOs) (48.4%)

4. Strengthening of extension at district levels through MOFA and NGOs/Up-scaling of best practices/ensuring adoption of improved technologies (45.2%)
5. Promotion of agricultural product marketing (including pricing and processing technologies) (38.7%)
6. Provision of appropriate technology to reduce drudgery/Promotion of animal traction. (32.3%)
7. Intensification of soil fertility management technologies for small farmers/Sustainable land management practices. (25.8%)
8. Provision of adequate and timely production inputs to farmers. (19.4%)
9. Development (intensification) of small ruminant production (16.1%)
10. Introduction (reintroduction) of subsidies for essential farm inputs/services. (16.1%)
11. Farm based research/Ensuring strong practical research-extension-farmer linkages. (16.1%)
12. Promotion of agriculture as a business (enterprise promotion) (12.9%)

It must be noted that there are considerable linkages and overlaps of the priorities listed and others and it is important that any programming will identify such for effective programming and intervention.

Two other “priorities” that were mentioned by a couple of respondents and which I consider very important for the achievement of some of the top priorities listed are (see Table 4 above):

1. Long-term strategic decentralized small-farmer development policy and programmes;(9.7%) and
2. Improved coordination of small farmer development efforts among development actors under a common development framework (6.5%).

2.2 DISCUSSION OF TOPMOST SMALL FARMER PRIORITIES IN NORTHERN GHANA

I. CREDIT TO FARMERS

This was the most stated topmost small farmer priority. The main reasons given for the importance of credit are:

- the high cost of agricultural inputs such as services for land preparation, seeds and fertilizers,
- the poverty of the people; and
- the fact that yields cannot be improved without such services.

According to most of the respondents, adoption of improved technologies cannot be possible in the absence of credit since the improved technologies come with certain

basic input requirements and usually farmers cannot afford to purchase those inputs. Several respondents, in identifying the importance of credit to small farmers, expressed the need for credit suppliers to pay attention to capacity building of farmers in credit management in particular and farm business management in general. They stressed the need for “supervised credit”.

The very small amounts of money given as credit to small farmers and the disregard for timely loan disbursements were also of great concern to respondents.

The suggestion is that there should be long-term well-established formal micro credit lending agencies, which are close to the communities. The Rural Banks should probably be supported by donors in terms of loanable funds, staff and capacity building to extend credit to small farmers in rural areas. Interestingly, very few (2) of the respondents argued for lower interest rates on loans. Most of them were more concerned about ways of eliminating “shylock moneylenders”.

Allied to the provision of credit in kind and cash, have been suggestions of intensifying and expanding inventory credit. To be able to do that successfully I believe there is need for a comprehensive appraisal of current and past inventory credit schemes to know the “secrets” of those that have been successful and the faults of those that have not been so successful.

My observation with regards credit to small farmers is that the constraint is more of HOW it can be done successfully and not whether it is necessary or not. Future food security programming needs to address HOW credit can be supplied efficiently and successfully to small farmers in rural communities. The “how” has to include repayment procedures and modalities to ensure sustainability.

Even though this study is not on the effectiveness of budgetary support being given to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) by various donors including CIDA, it is not out of place to emphasize here that implementation of food security programmes and projects cannot be effective if decisions have to be taken in Accra as it is in the case of FBO Development Fund, FABS, Multi-donor budgetary support and others. It is a fact that CIDA and other donors have committed significant funds to MoFA through some of these channels and those funds could have been used to tackle the credit problem. The other fact however is that until the MoFA is effectively decentralized especially with regards finance, centralized budgetary support cannot tackle issues at the community and district levels. The point being made here is relevant in the case of credit as well as irrigation, development of FBOs and CBOs and the strengthening of extension services, which are discussed below.

It seems most of Ghana’s donors believe money is the overriding requirement for effective food security programming. I disagree. Money is important and is a necessary condition but the overriding requirement is what to do with the money! What to do and how to do it must be determined at the district and sub-district (not national and sectoral) levels, for effectiveness. I believe that the districts can easily get the needed

human capacity to undertake meaningful food security programmes if they are given some autonomy.

2. PROMOTION OF SMALL-SCALE IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE

As indicated above, the second most important small farmer priority in northern Ghana is the promotion of irrigated agriculture. The argument is that given the resources available, particularly land and labour and the current trend of input prices, agricultural intensification is a must in northern Ghana. It is particularly stressed that northern Ghana cannot talk of food security in the next ten years without serious attention being paid to irrigated agriculture. It is however unfortunate that most programmes and donor assistance shy away from it.

Able bodied young men and women, including junior secondary and senior secondary school leavers, who would have taken up farming do not see a future in it because of the erratic rainfall situation and the fact that without irrigation they will be idle six months of the year. They end up in the cities in the south doing menial jobs and cut off from their local communities within a short period of time. Apart from the fact that such actions worsen the food insecurity situation in the country, especially northern Ghana, there are high social and economic costs associated with such migratory movements.

Another argument is that irrigated agriculture will ensure the production of high value crops for sale. Poverty and food insecurity in northern Ghana, it is argued, cannot be eradicated without market oriented agricultural production and agricultural-industry linkages. Irrigated agriculture is a means to achieving both.

Most of the respondents indicated the preference for small-scale irrigation systems. That means they are very much aware of problems associated with large-scale irrigation systems.

I agree perfectly that irrigated agriculture must be put high on the agenda for small farmer development in northern Ghana. However, the HOW, as stated with respect to credit, must be addressed. It is true that small-scale irrigated systems have proved to be more productive than the large-scale systems. That however is not a good indication of efficiency and viability. There is need to identify the relatively successful irrigation projects and learn of the secrets of success.

The development of irrigated agriculture is for sure capital intensive but it may be better to invest now to avert a calamity in the future. There is considerable talk of developing irrigation by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and other agencies, organizations and projects, such as CIFS, DWAP, FABS, AgSSIP and others but the reality is that nothing or very little is happening. Also the few dams and other structures that are constructed are of such poor quality that they are clearly not useful for irrigation. The very poor quality of assistance being given by many projects funded by donors is so serious that one wonders whether it is not time to advocate that communities should be left alone to take care of their own destinies. They may survive better that way!

3. DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG FARMER-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBOS)

It is believed that most development-oriented actions at the community level are only viable and sustainable if they are undertaken under the auspices of farmer groups or farmer cooperatives. It is felt that part of the answer to the HOW of credit to farmers and successful irrigated agriculture can be found in strong farmer-based and community-based organizations (FBOs and CBOs). The experience however is that it is not easy, though it is possible, to establish truly viable FBOs and CBOs.

Truly functioning FBOs and CBOs are indeed the answer to so many other problems of agriculture such as technology uptake, community level decision making, marketing of agricultural produce, storage and processing and many others.

Future food security programming needs to consider the FBO and CBO path to development very seriously. It is however necessary to note the complexities contained in the process. Development agents within the same areas need to, for example, work very closely, indeed work together!

We continue to witness the start of FBOs and CBOs and not their development because most projects trying to promote them are too short-term to be able to nurture them. There are too many short-term projects (by various donors and organizations) trying to do the same thing and leaving the processes mid stream. Until long-term development agendas are drawn up and pursued in a consistent manner and there is considerable collaboration between organizations and agencies working in the same locations, we will never succeed in establishing viable FBOs and CBOs.

4. STRENGTHENING OF EXTENSION AT DISTRICT LEVELS THROUGH MOFA AND NGOS/UPSCALING OF BEST PRACTICES/ENSURING ADOPTION OF IMPROVED TECHNOLOGIES

There seems to be a wide gap between available technological knowledge and its use by farmers. The reasons are very many and policy makers, politicians, researchers, trainers (agricultural teachers), extension workers and farmers all share the blame. It is however obvious that if this problem is not adequately tackled small farmer development in northern Ghana and indeed all of Ghana will continue to be only a dream.

As stated above in (3), strong FBOs and CBOs can be very important in addressing this problem but more has to be done by all the stakeholders enumerated and others. Agriculture is, for example, so vital for human existence that its development should be far above political interference. There should be effective decentralization to the

district, zonal or regional level depending on what level is seen to be appropriate as units for feasible food security planning and programming.

Strengthening farmer interactions with extension and research and instituting a more participatory approach had been the cornerstones of the MoFA/CIDA FARMER Project especially within the past one and a half years. The continuation of that process has however already received a jolt. There is so much uncertainty as to the next step of the Project that stakeholders of the project including farmers have already written FARMER off as another deceptive adventure. It is clear that FARMER has not yet been institutionalized within MoFA, so MoFA cannot continue the process.

5. PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARKETING (INCLUDING PRICING AND PROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES)

Agricultural product marketing has been a very neglected area in intervention programmes yet it is a key factor in sustainable production. Nobody will continue to increase production of a product if the surplus cannot be sold. Thus it is easy to notice a bumper harvest year for a crop being followed by very low output the following year. Usually the blame has always been put on the weather but emerging evidence point to lack of market having significant role to play.

Non intervention in the market either by government, the private sector or NGOs have always resulted in very low prices for farmers especially in times of bumper harvest and during the period of harvest. Thus farmers always gain less net income with increase in output since the demand for food is generally inelastic.

Lack of good storage and processing of many of the commodities implies they have to be sold in the raw form leading to deterioration in quality. Value addition to agricultural produce is very necessary to reduce bulk, transportation costs, storage costs, and to improve quality.

As discussed already with respect to other priority areas identified, the HOW to improve marketing has to be worked out. The case of the Savanna Farmers' Marketing Company, a limited liability company being floated by the Association of Church Development Projects (ACDEP), is a model worth studying.

Some of the respondents suggested the promotion of regional commodity markets to open up markets for produce from the different African countries.

6. PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY TO REDUCE DRUDGERY

Many of the respondents believe the appropriate land preparation technology that should be promoted is animal traction. The argument is that farm sizes are generally very small and uneconomical because of the drudgery in the use of the hoe. Since the use of tractor has been seen to be detrimental to the soil, the best technology for land

preparation should be animal traction. Only a few believe tractors should be used in land preparation.

Animal traction technology in northern Ghana has been known for over 50 years yet its use is not very widespread as one would have expected. Reasons for its limited use include competition by tractors, animal rustling and social inhibitions among others. It is noteworthy that despite many years of experience of the inappropriateness of massive use of tractors in agriculture in Ghana, the Government's present thrust to "modernize" Ghanaian agriculture is dependent on the importation of tractors and the call for "large scale agricultural production". That definitely takes us back several decades. With this kind of thinking and action in Accra, what reasonable progress can be made in promoting a more sustainable technological option at the district level? Aspects of the present debate was clearly argued out in 1981 in my paper "Green Revolution or Evolution? The Case of Independent African Countries".¹

7. INTENSIFICATION OF SOIL FERTILITY MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES FOR SMALL FARMERS/SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Everywhere in northern Ghana, farmers complain of "dead soil". There are several soil fertility management technologies that have been developed **for** farmers. The technologies should have been developed **with** farmers. Even though that was not done in most of the cases, there are possibilities of internalizing the technologies with appropriate participatory methods.

This priority area ties in with priorities 4 and 3 discussed above. Adequate strengthening of the extension services with relevant participatory methods as well as strong with FBOs and CBOs can easily lead to the intensification of soil fertility management and sustainable land management technologies.

It is hoped that the Ghana Environmental Management Project (GEMP) will address these issues when it eventually takes off. Ghana is full of ideas. What is terribly lacking is the HOW and the will to implement plans! I hope those involved in GEMP will clearly consider and debate the "how" deeply before setting out to implement it.

8. PRIORITIES 8 TO 12

Priorities 8 to 12 as listed above are very familiar to almost all persons concerned with agriculture and respondents stated what we have probably heard over and over again. I strongly believe if adequate attention is paid to those already discussed these others will fall in place.

9. OTHER "PRIORITIES" NEEDING ATTENTION

¹ *Africa Development*, Vol. VI, No. 3, pp. 8 - 62. (The journal is published by CODESRIA based in Dakar, Senegal).

There are two other “priorities” that scored low with regards to consensus by respondents but which I think are important with regards sustainable food security programming. They are:

- i) Long-term strategic decentralized small-farmer development policy and programmes, and
- ii) Improved coordination of small farmer development efforts among development actors under a common development framework.

These are basically policy and strategy priority areas for government agents, NGOs and donor agencies. Unless these two “priorities” are addressed in close consultation with farmers very little can be achieved. The two- and five-year programme-supports hardly achieve anything. The learning processes of all beings are generally long term. It is when farmers, extension workers, researchers etc. begin to understand and appreciate innovations and processes introduced that these short-term projects or programmes will be ending. When that is repeated several times farmers become very skeptical of other interventions and the learning process requires even a longer time. Donors and other stakeholders have to come to terms with whether they actually intend to achieve lasting results. No sustainable impact can be expected from a 3 to 5 year project especially when 5-year projects are effectively implemented for 3 years or less.

There is no doubt that CIDA in particular has been conscious of this need for long-term programming and did support the development of Regional Food Security Action Plans. Why then after that was FARMER Project designed for 5 years with 3-year actual implementation? MoFA or CIDA or both should know why but there is need to know what was wrong with the action plans.

2.3 CONSTRAINTS/CHALLENGES WITH REGARDS TO PRIORITIES

Respondents listed several constraints/challenges with regards to the stated priorities. Most of them were basically the reasons given for the choice of priorities. They included unfavorable climatic conditions, poor soils, poverty, unavailability of credit etc.

A few other constraints not discussed already were however also mentioned. They include:

1. Limited opportunities for on-farm and off-farm employment.
2. Very poor infrastructure, especially roads to and in rural areas.
3. Bureaucracy in the implementation of agricultural policies and programmes and in approving funds.
4. Ineffective collaboration between MoFA and NGOs.
5. Very inadequate agricultural extension and technical staff.
6. Usually “funds received are from donors which have specific interests some of which are at variance with farmer priorities”.
7. The curricula of agricultural training institutions do not seem to address the real problems of present day agriculture (the priority areas listed). There are too

- many “yield, yield scientists”. Little emphasis is put on sustainable production systems. There is for example very limited or no training in storage, processing, marketing, micro finance, agricultural management etc.
8. Lack of commitment of Government to the development of agriculture of northern Ghana. “Government must be sincere and committed to small farmer issues as it is to cocoa”.
 9. Incomplete financial decentralization and planning by the Government.

The respondents believe these constraints and others will adversely affect attempts to address the identified priorities.

2.4 ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SMALL FARMER DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN GHANA

Upper West Region

IFAD (UWADEP), World Vision International, Action Aid, ACDEP stations (Nandom Agric Project, Wa Agric Project, Finsi Agric Project, Tumu Agric Project, Lassie Tuolu Agric Project etc.), ADRA, SARI, Technoserve, OXFAM, Suntaa-Nuntaa, EPA Upper West Agro-Industries, Rural Action Aid Programme (RAAP) and several others.

Upper East Region

ACDEP (Garu Agric Project, Sandema Agric Project, DDO etc), UDS, SARI, MOFA, CRS (FOSADEP), SFMC, Action Aid, World Vision, CIDA, IFAD (LACOSREP), ADRA, Ghana Cotton Company, Tono and Veia Irrigation Projects, GIDA, Technoserve and several others.

Northern Region

ACDEP (Yendi, Chereponi and Saboba E.P. Stations, Langbensi Agric Station, Mile 7 Agric Station etc.), SEND Foundation, UDS, SARI, MOFA, OIC, Sasakawa Global 2000, CRS (FOSADEP), SFMC, Action Aid, World Vision, GTZ, CIDA (CIFS and FARMER), UNICEF, IFAD, CARE International, Ghana Cotton Company, OXFAM, NewEnergy, GDCP, Amasachina Self-Help Association, Gub-Katimali Society, Bosbel Industries and several others.

2.5 WHAT NORTHERN GHANAIAN CIVIL SOCIETY EXPECT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS CIDA

This section reports on what respondents expect of international organizations such as CIDA (point 7 of the questionnaire), but with brief comments as to what CIDA is currently doing or not doing.

1. Direct assistance to small farmers to adopt best practices.

This has started to some degree with respect to some CIDA projects such as FARMER and CIFS. It is however very limited and very uncertain in terms of its medium to long-term availability. Also when farmers and NGOs talk of “assistance” they invariably mean provision of credit. That has not been part of the present packages and indeed should not. The projects should however facilitate the process of obtaining credit from sources such as rural banks.

2. Provide adequate support, not tokens.

There is the impression that most of the donor support for projects is invariably used by personnel of donor agencies and Ghanaian bureaucrats. I must say that there is some credibility in some of those impressions. The sheer numbers of people flying in for one workshop or another, for evaluations, for testing new ideas etc. gives the impression that the intent of the support is not the poor farmer but the Ghanaian bureaucrat and technocrat and foreign technical partners. We seem to be reducing farmers to permanent “guinea pigs” at which we try out all our dreamt-up experiments. We must reduce the proportion of funds that go to national and international consultants and the administration of projects and focus more on the direct needs of farmers.

3. Support value chain development and not just production / There should be a holistic view of small farmer development.

I still believe that even though the FARMER Project started very slowly and with problems, if it is allowed to function, a lot of good can come out of it. One obvious area to which FARMER would have moved is this value-chain development. With the network of activities with MoFA and NGO field staff, the development of value chains and produce marketing can easily be facilitated through FARMER and possibly CIFS.

4. Long term (not less than 10 years) support programmes. Many respondents mentioned this as critical.

There may be documents suggesting that CIDA Food Security Programme is long-term but the actions on the ground do not suggest long-term perspectives. Nothing suggests collaboration and coordination of projects to ensure a long-term food security agenda. Even CIFS and FARMER which operate very close to each other are yet to share experiences and collaborate in ways that suggests they have a common agenda. Good intentions must be translated into actions for them to be useful.

5. Identify and work with only organizations that have proven track records of working with small farmers.

Over time many donor organizations have been suspicious of some NGOs and they have good reasons for it. The people believe that donors should channel assistance through existing structures rather than encouraging the creation of new structures.

6. Invest in intermediate technology for farmers.

One expects that some emphasis will be put on intermediate technology in the areas of storage and processing in particular. So far it has not been so. Little seems to be going

on in this area with regards technology adoption. Donor assistance should be more prominent in the adoption, or more appropriately, the participatory technology development process, for storage and processing.

7. Fund private sector initiatives for processing agricultural produce.

There are limitations of the demand for most processed agricultural products in rural areas. That means the urban areas are the targets for most processed agricultural products. There is, however, stiff competitions in urban areas from imported products. That means investments in agricultural processing plants have to be at high levels for the produce to be competitive. That is not so presently. Most agricultural processing plants are currently outdated and very costly to maintain.

8. Emphasize on provision of rural infrastructure and facilities for community mobilization and development (NOT WORKSHOPS AND CARS)

What most rural dwellers know about donor-supported large scale agricultural projects are pick-ups and workshops upon workshops. Some of agricultural extension officers confirm that there are too many uncoordinated workshops.

9. Fund basic research and not only so-called demand driven research.

You cannot demand what you do not know of. Some of the new promising technologies that need to be researched into or sent to test on farmers' fields are not known to the farmers who need them most and so they cannot demand them.

10. "Compel" national governments to take poverty reduction serious.

The implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy is far from satisfactory. Donors have committed so much funds to it but little is being achieved and yet donors continue to keep mute. That, as far as civil society is concerned, is clear indication of non-commitment of donors to poverty alleviation in poor countries.

11. Support upscaling of "the model farmer".

Projects and programmes usually affect only a few groups of people. The successes normally reported are from those few. The only way food insecurity concerns can be addressed is to upscale the success stories, that is, the "model farmer", the "model processor", the "model marketer" etc. That is yet to be seen.

12. Encourage development of the known to the unknown (and note that it takes time to achieve that).

Farmers' indigenous knowledge should be the starting point of technology development. So far there has been little consideration of the people's indigenous knowledge.

13. Sufficient and relevant education and training should be given to MOFA staff.

MoFA staff seem to be still dependent on methods that have proved to be disasters. The commandeering and "I know all" attitude is too prominent in most agricultural field staff.

There is need for reorientation of all staff in the ministry to accept the fact that farmers' experiential knowledge is as relevant as the knowledge they have acquired through formal training.

14. CIDA and other development agencies should coordinate their activities in implementing development projects.

Coordination of activities by development workers is very critical at the district level. The District Assemblies have a lot of role to play in ensuring effective collaboration and cooperation between development agents within the particular districts.

15. More technical expertise required (and not the present poor managers of projects).

A number of foreign "technical experts" brought in for a number of projects by donors sometimes turn out to "students on attachments". That is not good enough especially when those they work with are not informed. Also when such people are brought they should be humble enough to learn from those they work with. Donor representatives should be schooled sufficiently to know that farmers, extension agents and others all have had several years of different experiences and they should not assume they are dealing with ignorant people. The people are only poor in money but they are very rich in so many other things!

16. CIDA and other international organizations should learn to listen and act on advises from the "grassroots".

A number of "international experts" have to accept that learning is a lifelong process and also that it can be obtained from all manner of people, including "illiterate" farmers and "untrained" agricultural agents. The level of informal (and even formal) dialoguing that should take place between international and local project personnel should increase for better cross-fertilization of ideas.

17. The feeling among many local development agents is that CIDA and other international agents are only interested in workshops, meetings and paper work and not the development of the small farmer. They should change that perception.

Workshops are necessary for new knowledge and new ways of doing things can be passed on to the people. The sheer volume of workshops in projects and programmes however suggest that there are duplications and many of the workshops are unnecessary. Also for agriculture, all workshops should have components of hands-on practice.

3. COMMENTARY ON CIDA-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The two **major** CIDA-supported agricultural development activities in northern Ghana have been the Community-Driven Initiatives for Food Security (CIFS) project and the Farmer-Responsive Mechanisms in Extension and Research (FARMER) project. They

have derived their strength from the general CIDA food programming strategy for northern Ghana as captured in “CIDA Food Security Strategy for Northern Ghana”, a 2004/5 working document. According to that document;

Other CIDA food security interventions (which are not clearly visible) have been through the Multi-Donor Budgetary support (MDBS), the FABS, FBO Development Fund etc. All these sources of funds for food security are not visible because they are centralized and decisions are made in Accra. There is urgent need for effective decentralization if Ghana is to get anywhere with regards to food security interventions.

Table 5 gives the CIDA Food Security Program interventions as at 2006. We believe the most effective are the interventions at the district and sub-district levels even though other factors determine levels of success. We also believe the least effective are interventions at the national and sectoral levels. We will be eager to read evaluation reports of all these interventions to confirm or deny our beliefs.

“The overall goal of (CIDA) Food Security programming is:

To assist the government of Ghana to reduce the incidence of food insecurity in rural northern Ghana.

The specific objectives are:

1. To promote food, nutrition and income security among the rural people in northern Ghana through an approach that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.
2. To enhance the capacity of regional, district and local institutions to deliver improved services to address the food security needs of the rural people of northern Ghana, in particular women.

The expected impact and outcomes are as follows:

Impact:

1. Reduction in the length of the lean season for households suffering from food insecurity.
2. Reduction in the relative proportion of chronic food insecure households in targeted areas.

Outcomes:

1. Increased availability of food for rural households and women in targeted areas of northern Ghana.
2. Increased cash income of rural households and women in targeted areas of northern Ghana.
3. Improved family diets and nutrition of participating households.

Enhanced capacity of Ministry, District Assembly and NGO staff to deliver food security related services across northern Ghana and in particular to women farmers.”

Table 5. Current CIDA Food Security Program Interventions (2006)²

Principal Focus	Intervention Name	Total Budget (CAD)	Start-End Dates
Sectoral	Sector Wide Approach with MoFA (FABS)	\$ 85,000,000	Mar 2004-Mar 2009
	Farmer-Based Organizations Fund (FBO)	\$ 1,700,000	Oct 2002-Mar 2008
	Food Security Advisory Services	\$ 3,000,000	Apr 2002-June 2007
	Measuring Impact in Food Security	\$ 1,100,000	Apr 2001-Sept 2009
	Land Administration Project (LAP)	\$ 1,500,000	Feb 2004-Dec 2009
	Ghana Environment Management Project (GEMP)	\$ 8,000,000	Sept 2006-Dec 2011
	Ghana Support to Food Security	\$ 500,000	Sept 2001-Dec 2006
	Hydrogeological Assessment	\$ 3,000,000	May 2004-Sept 2008
Regional level	Farmer Responsive Mechanisms for Extension and Research (FARMER)	\$ 10,000,000	June 2002-June 2007
	Food Security and Environmental Facility (FSEF)	\$ 15,000,000	Under reconsideration
	GRATIS III	\$ 5,000,000	Aug 2000-Dec 2008
	Developing Rural Entrepreneurs (NSAC)	\$ 2,180,000	Mar 2004-Jan 2009
District and Sub-District level	District-Wide Assistance Program (DWAP) ³	\$ 15,000,000	Mar 2004-Sept 2009
	District Capacity Building (DISCAP) ³	\$ 7,700,000	Nov 2000-Mar 2006
	Community-driven Initiatives in Food Security (CIFS), Comp 2	\$ 5,000,000	Apr 2004-Oct 2010
Total:		\$256,680,000	

² Thanks to Diana McLean for the above table and for the brief descriptions of each of the interventions which is given in Annex II.

³ These are largely governance initiatives which are aimed to address development issues in the rural districts of the northern regions, including food security.

From the view of northern Ghanaian civil society as analyzed above, the activities that should be pursued to result in the outcomes outlined above are largely ignored or not tackled explicitly. Civil society believes very strongly in credit, irrigated agriculture and the strengthening of farmer-based organizations. CIDA expects these to be handled through interventions at the national and sectoral levels. That for sure has not and will not happen. There is need for CIDA and other donors to address some of these activities more explicitly. The competing needs for funds at national and sectoral levels are too many for one to expect significant actions on credit, irrigation etc. in northern Ghana.

The clear area of agreement between CIDA food security programming and civil society priorities is with respect to strengthening of extension activities of MOFA and NGOs. The CIDA/MOFA FARMER project has been attempting to address this problem but with great difficulties because of great resistance to change in doing things by almost everybody including CIDA. The chosen methodology, participatory technology development (PTD) is clearly superior to other known methods. Its use critically assumes that all stakeholders will agree to “get started”! Neither MOFA, CIDA nor researchers accepted to “get started”. All came with “I know all” and “you know nothing” attitude and time was not spent in trying to achieve “Stakeholders Concerted Action”. Also CIDA is very impatient. PTD cannot succeed with impatience! Real successful food security programming in northern Ghana should take at least five years of actual implementation and patient understanding of learning processes for concrete and sustainable results to be begin to be seen. There is strong support among the civil society respondents for the model and its potential role in strengthening participatory technology development.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: INFORMATION COLLECTION INSTRUMENT/CHECKLIST

From: Prof. Saa Dittoh, UDS, Tamale.

Please provide the following information to help MoFA and CIDA take decisions with regards Food Security Programming in Ghana.

1. As a development agency concerned with small farmer development, what will you regard as the five most important priorities in small farmer development in Ghana? Give reasons.
2. What in your opinion are the constraints/challenges with regards these priorities?
3. Name organizations (local, national and international) that have made useful contributions to small farmer development in Ghana in general and northern Ghana in particular. Indicate their specific contributions.
4. What concrete steps can be taken, and by who, to achieve sustainable small farmer development in the country?
5. What is your organization doing to achieve sustainable small farmer development?
6. Why can't you do more than you are doing now?
7. Give general comments on what you expect of international organizations such as CIDA.

ANNEX II: CIDA PROGRAMMING IN GHANA

Many of the food security interventions address concerns at several or all levels of programming; they are classified below according to their level. The current interventions will contribute towards the longer-term goal in the following ways:

National Level

Multi-Donor Budgetary Support (MDBS): This project represents Canada's contribution to the MDBS Program that, through funds provided to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP), supports priorities identified in the GPRS. It is founded on a new approach to country/donor partnership, commitment to local ownership, improved donor coordination, greater policy coherence, commitment to predictable funding, common rules of disbursement, use and confidence in government systems, and use of results-based approaches. Results to date include the dropping of petroleum subsidies; Cabinet approval of the Medium-Term Private Sector Development Strategy with an action plan and evaluation matrix; an increase in access of rural populations to potable water; and an improvement in the quality of roads.

Sector Level

Food and Agriculture Budgetary Support (FABS): The FABS constitutes CIDA's contribution to the GoG for the implementation of the food and agriculture component of the GPRS. The FABS provides budgetary support to MoFA to implement the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP). FASDEP aims to enhance human resource development and institutional capacity building, improve financial services delivery, support technology development and dissemination, develop infrastructure, promote selected commodities and improve access to markets and ensure food security. Results to date include an increase in cultivated areas under irrigation; an increase in access to mechanized tillage; and an increase in small-scale agro-processing. Extensive discussions with MoFA and MoFEP have taken place to identify triggers/targets and to ensure that a proper disbursement cycle has been identified. The GoG is currently in the process of developing and refining the FASDEP, as well as its poverty reduction strategy. As management of FASDEP improves and the GPRS II incorporates the same priorities, longer-term support could be achieved through MDBS in support of the GPRS II.

Farmer-Based Organizations (FBO) Development Fund: The FBO Development Fund is part of the Agricultural Services Sub-Sector Investment Program (AgSSIP), which is part of the FASDEP. It aims to serve the near and medium-term needs of farmer group development and programming, including capacity development. Group formation is expected to create greater access to goods, services and markets, thereby also instilling greater constituent confidence in government responsiveness. The funds are to be equally available to women and men, allowing for transformative effects in society as livelihoods and opportunities improve. By 2005, over 73 proposals

were assessed and accepted; most beneficiary organizations received training in group dynamics as a first level of capacity development.

Food Security Advisory Services: CIDA has made provisions for senior advisory support to assist the GoG in analysis, policy support, sectoral support and programming support in FASDEP. The project augments available expertise and addresses macro food policy requirements. This includes the provision of specialists including the Food Security Policy Advisor and Food Security Coordinator based at the Program Support Unit in Accra and administration support in both Accra and the north of Ghana.

Measuring Impact in Food Security Program: This project aims to improve information-based decision making related to food security, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of CIDA's food security programming and to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation capacity of the MoFA Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PPMED) at the district, regional and national levels. The results of these experiences are directly relevant to FASDEP and GPRS II monitoring, both of which include food security outcomes. To date, Legon University has rewritten the baseline summary clarifying linkages between indicators; completed a Baseline Data Questionnaire and Baseline Data Survey; trained three MoFA officers; and prepared Regional and District level food security strategies.

Land Administration Project (LAP): The Ministry of Lands and Forests (MLF) is implementing the LAP in pilot areas in all ten regions of Ghana to improve access to land and land tenure security. CIDA is one of six international donors trying to address the legal and regulatory issues around land rights to ensure a transparent and fair system of land use and management in the long term. It is expected to establish an equitable framework for women in the process that will have long-term outcomes on livelihoods. Improvements in land administration are expected to promote new investments in agriculture and encourage better natural resource management, leading to enhanced food security, agricultural productivity and income by reducing land conflicts and clarifying land ownership. Targets for legislative change and regulatory capacity have been identified in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The **Ghana Environment Management Project (GEMP)** will provide support to build the institutional capacity of the Environmental Protection Agency and funds to implement key activities of the National Action Programme to Combat Drought and Desertification (NAP). Technical support will be provided to improve priority setting, to ensure gender equality in NAP programming and to initiate pilot activities in districts and communities.

Ghana Support to Food Security provides advisory support to the GoG in its efforts to strengthen the agriculture sector, including support in the planning, design and implementation of CIDA's FS Program.

The Hydrogeological Assessment Project will increase the ability of water supply planners to identify and monitor viable groundwater resources in the north of Ghana, in a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable manner. It supports a comprehensive assessment of the potential for sustainable development of groundwater in northern Ghana and enhances GoG capacity to undertake assessments, manage information, and undertake informed planning. Capacity development is being provided to the Water Resources Commission (WRC) and other GoG institutions responsible for planning and managing water resources.

Regional Level

The **FARMER** project in the three northern regions is improving access to and the use of demand-driven agricultural information and technology by low-income and/or resource poor farm households, agro-processors, marketers and communities. The project focuses on strengthening the capacities of existing Ghanaian institutions and organizations that currently provide services in agricultural research and extension, including stronger linkages between formal and informal organizations. The project emphasizes local management structures and is expected to provide models for MoFA in its nationwide programming.

The **Food Security and Environment Facility (FSEF)** is currently under reconsideration, since other funds and mechanisms have been created since its conception that may accomplish similar community-level environmental initiatives. If it is activated, it will operate in the three northern regions and will provide a mechanism to support innovative projects proposed by Ghanaian organizations and communities, possibly in collaboration with Canadian and international organizations. Target organizations include NGOs, private sector, research and educational institutions, and local government bodies. The project outcome would be more effective food security/environment programming in the next 3 to 7 years, including a rationalization of competencies and roles among the various public, civil and private organizations.

GRATIS III supports both government and private sector capacity to design, construct and maintain service delivery in appropriate agricultural production and processing technologies, with the objective to create and sustain demand for services in the farming community, and especially among women. Effective linkages with the private sector are being encouraged. GRATIS III builds upon capacities built over many years of support in appropriate technology development and service delivery.

Developing Rural Entrepreneurs (NSAC) focuses on institutional capacity building to increase access, and availability of, demand driven and relevant entrepreneurial training in northern Ghana in both formal and informal settings. Working with a range of educational institutions, government and NGO, the project will develop the human resource capacity of formal and informal educational organizations to address the needs of rural entrepreneurs. Specifically, the project is working with the three Polytechnics in the north and with the Opportunities Industrialization Centers Tamale (OICT). The aim of the project is to enhance the ability of northern Ghanaians, particularly women and youth, to start and sustain micro-enterprises and small businesses.

District/Sub-District Level

DWAP is providing support through MoFEP directly to all 34 District Assemblies in northern Ghana for the implementation of District Development Plans. It aims to develop district capacity to set priorities and effectively use funds to support local needs, based on community needs, in ways that increase accountability, transparency and participation in planning and implementation. This project provides a template for the proposed District Development Fund under the National Action Plan on Decentralization. To date, most of CIDA's funds are supporting the construction of health clinics and classrooms, as well as social infrastructure projects. The project is generating valuable information on district performance in key areas such as procurement and contract management, which should contribute to creating an enabling policy environment for decentralized development programming.

DISCAP aims to strengthen local government capacities in the three northern regions to manage, in collaboration with NGOs and private sector stakeholders, potable water and sanitation resources. Results thus far include the completion of Baseline water quality studies in 30% of small towns; the incorporation of a sanitation strategy into the Medium-Term Development Plans of 75% of the Districts; the delivery of a Poverty Reduction Monitoring and Evaluation training workshop; and the utilization of IT equipment in regions to improve performance in reporting and presenting data.

The Community-Driven Initiatives for Food Security (CIFS), Component 2 aims to promote and increase the effective use of existing local government structures and processes so they can better respond to community-driven food security priorities and to increase sustainable household food security in participating communities. It is focused on the ten districts of the Eastern Corridor of the Northern Region. The approach takes a strong focus on gender mainstreaming. The project takes a pro-active stance in dealing with environmental events or disasters through an analysis of trends and early warning systems. Communities are learning how to build their own capacity to analyze information from both indigenous and modern sources. The project will also have a direct impact on the food security of individuals through the implementation of initiatives that will increase agricultural production, decrease post-harvest losses, increase access to agricultural inputs and markets, increase on- and off-farm income and increase knowledge and understanding of nutrition. It is expected that the project will play an important role in supporting the GoG as it proceeds with its transition to a decentralized approach to governance, by demonstrating that local levels of government can effectively plan and implement priority community development initiatives. CIFS is expected to contribute positively to instilling constituent confidence in local and national government, to help communities discern the best entry points for support, and to allow for a rationalization of service delivery among government, NGOs, the private sector, etc. in ways that are sustainable in the long term.