

The young lady who hosted EDP participant Charlotte Knull is a village agent promoting good agric practices in Ghanaian cocoa. The initiatives of the chocolate industry are a gleam of hope to the host farmers. Even though some measures conflict with the development plans of district administrations. Yet, there is a lot to be done. The agricultural training programmes need to be better coordinated. Their outcomes and impact need to be monitored more closely.

Inspired by the lessons learnt of the EDP visitors from Germany and Cote d'Ivoire, the Ghanaian experts of the Accra Dialogue Workshop (Tulip Inn, 10 Feb 2017) agree: a sector-wide approach to improved cooperation of all cocoa actors involved in Ghana is urgently needed. It is not the individual funding programmes of large enterprises, but a genuine multi-stakeholder partnership of industry, state and civil society which can make a contribution to the sustainable creation of value in Ghanaian cocoa. In February this year, fourteen (14) EDP participants from the cocoa and chocolate industry, official development cooperation and NGOs had immersed hands-on in life and work of cocoa farmers to reality-check a key concern: Do social standards strengthen community well-being and integral human development?

It is the Ghanaian dialogue partners who concluded: sector-wide cooperation of cocoa stakeholders which runs deep and inclusively is very much needed. It requires Ghanaian and international actors to forge an alliance involving the current initiatives of the industry and the State.

However, by support of the *Cocoa Life* Programme, *CARE International* in Ghana has succeeded in setting-up functioning development committees in many cocoa-producing villages. Now, the interests and needs of women, men, children and young people are being formulated more precisely. Many development activities are being implemented successfully. The commitment of the industry and their cooperation with professionally operating NGOs made it possible!

However: Sustainability is a journey!

Join us and walk this road together with *Exposure and Dialogue*^(R)!

Your participation in the upcoming [Exposure and Dialogue Programme \(10 to 14 February 2018\)](#) in the Ghanaian cocoa sector will send a strong signal towards the entire value chain. Especially to those whose well-being and (agro-) economic success is not only important for Europe's consumption of high-quality chocolate in 20 years to come. Each girl whose personal development is not being hampered by early pregnancy but enabled to undergo applied training or tertiary education; each individual young man or lady who has a viable job perspective supports Ghana in staying what it is today: A corner stone to peace and stability in the West African region.

Jörg Hilgers; please mail to: hilgers@edpev.de

Women Cocoa Farmers Work for the Future of their Children



In February 2017, I set out on my journey to Kumasi in Ghana in order to learn more about the women, that is, the female farmers, and to experience everyday life directly. In the traditional view, it is still normal for a man to work for himself and his family. Women are expected to subordinate themselves and first and foremost look after the children and raise them. In this way, their knowledge is passed down to the next generations. But, often in the background and scarcely visible from the outside, women carry out more duties than men (want to) appreciate, and this begins before sunrise while most men are still asleep. Before women begin their work in the fields, they sweep up and clean, fetch water, wash the dishes, prepare the cooking place, make a fire and get everything ready for breakfast, so the children are at school on time. The 46-year-old farmer is a single parent. She has six children and cultivates her own garden (which belongs to the family), sometimes growing eggplants, sometimes okra or other

vegetables, depending on what her neighbours plant in rotation. Opinions are exchanged, people stick together. In addition, she is responsible for cultivating and harvesting a big piece of land which does not belong to her. The plants there are mainly cocoa trees, plantains (cooking bananas), bananas, pineapple, cassava and coconut palms. Fifty per cent of the produce goes to the owner of the land, and she sells the rest of the produce at the local markets. Our host walks round the plantation, tells us about the trees, shows us how the cocoa trees are tended, how the fruits are harvested and fermented and how new plantains are grown from new shoots.

The farmer is a busy woman and does not look her age – she carries out her everyday tasks and voluntary work with great energy and effort, and with good organisation. Even long after darkness falls, she is still busy, preparing something for the next day or having discussions. She enjoys great respect in the village, although she is divorced. She also holds important honorary positions for the good of all, but especially for the children and women in her cooperative. She develops new projects and speaks on behalf of the people who cannot easily express themselves.



Only a few women, like our host, have the courage and strength to take their lives into their own hands. By doing so they light a little fire and carry other villagers with them. In doing this, with understanding, luck and skill they also motivate the cooperative leaders to try out new things together, and to encourage streamlined management and more efficient procedures. In order for the children (including the girls) to have better lives later, only few women, including our host, take an intense interest in the village school and in the girls' education and training. They virtually sacrifice themselves for their children. But they do not complain – on the contrary, their work looking after the school gives their lives a meaning, it empowers and motivates them. Their dreams are the welfare of

their children and the hope of a better life.

The greatest gift for me was the enormous warmth and hospitality and the openness and attentiveness that were shown to us. I found it very moving. And although unfortunately I could not understand the women's language, we did communicate excellently: with our eyes, with our hands.

It would be desirable for this village and others if the living conditions could improve at last: if the women were regarded with more respect, if they were empowered and if their competences were better used, if people had easier access to further education, microcredits and affordable healthcare. It is important that rural areas develop better than they did in the past, in order to remain attractive to young people. The villagers could lead better lives with sound agriculture and other activities, or could set up new business models.

There really is a need for integrated solutions with government and non-government agencies, the private sector and all interested parties. For all people – not only in Ghana or West Africa – I really hope they succeed. A century ago, the Ghanaian polymath *James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey* (1875-1927) put it this way: *"The surest way to keep people down is to educate the men and neglect the women. If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a whole nation."*

Almut Feller, German Initiative for Sustainable Cocoa (Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao) / Association of the German Confectionary Industry)

Cocoa Sector Sustainability – My Lessons Learnt for a Road Map



Amansie West, 5:30 a.m., 32 degree centigrade, humidity above 80 percent. Madame Yaah, my host mother, knocked at the door. Wake up, I heard her saying. I slept on the floor; only covered by a mosquito net. I jumped into my cloths, and went out of my little room. Her son already waited for me. Our task in the morning was to fetch water from the deep well several hundred meters away from our home. At six a.m. daylight arose. After the water was filled into the water bins we cleaned the courtyard with self-made brooms. Then we showered. There was a little room, covered by a curtain. This bucket-shower

was so refreshing. The day continued with preparing and eating breakfast. We prepared jointly our local food, also at noon and in the evening, supported by our host family.

After breakfast we went to the farm to harvest cocoa pods. We opened them and put the cocoa beans onto and under banana leaves for fermentation. We participated in the family's day-to-day life and work. We met the director of the village school, the chiefs of the village and have been part of a meeting with the women and CARE talking about alternative business like making and selling soap. Last but not least, we have been part of the village community, visited other families, played with the kids and spoke also to many of them to understand their way of living. People's hospitality was simply great. And I am sure, we have been the very first white people staying overnight there and showed interest in their affairs.

Karen, my exposure mate from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany as well as our facilitator, Mrs. Esther Nana Animah from CARE also stayed at the same house. We went into this region to get in such close contact with the farmers because we really wanted to learn more about their life and work.

I wanted to understand how they manage their daily livelihoods. *What are their every-day challenges? How do they manage their lives? How do they finance their living? How do they educate their kids? How are the women being involved in the work at their houses and on the farms?* These issues are very important to understand if we really want to work on sustainable cocoa!

This exposure was very well organized by the *EDP Association* and hosted very well by *CARE International* in Ghana. *EDP* Moderator Jörg Hilgers was present and had always answers for organizational questions. Dr. Theophilus Nkansah from *CARE* and the facilitators did a great job to always making sure that we were feeling well and safe. They also managed all the translation work because the village people speak Twi, only. After the exposure we went back to Accra and participated in a workshop informing other sector stakeholders about our experience and how we could better stick together to improve farmers' lives. Participants of the workshop have been; among others Mr Joseph B. Aidoo, the new CEO of *COCOBOD* which is the Government's organization for handling the cocoa business in Ghana. Also members of NGOs and industry representatives participated, e.g. from *CARGILL* and *OLAM*. We were able to identify areas of concern that need urgent action to truly work on cocoa sustainability:

- Falling cocoa prices
- The health of the environment (cocoa trees are too old, use of fertilizers and pesticides)
- Farmers' sense of entrepreneurship (lack of good business practices)
- Quality of (micro-) loans and the financial infrastructure, resp. the lack there-of.
- Productivity, KPI of harvest, efficiency of kg per ha
Efficiency of trainings and sustainability of GAP knowledge provided
- Training efficiency and helping people turn into a mode of doing start-ups
- Utility of seedlings, also in terms of their quality and accessibility
- Women being left alone after livelihood training on alternative products (e.g. soap production, bread baking)
- The very obvious and challenging digital gap; thus, challenges of little access to information, and hampered technical exchange
- Strengthen public private partnerships; and the need to do more jointly and in ways better coordinated
- Improvement of inputs from private and government sectors
- Proper information to the farmers (i.e. premium for certified cocoa, e.g. what happens with the additional income to the cooperative societies)
- Transparency in general, and on levels, but specifically when it comes to money

Lessons learned / Follow-up concerns:

Overall, I was thankful to be part of this program, because it changed my mind in respect to a number of relevant questions:

1. What can we do to improve the livelihoods of those farmers?
2. How can we help them to maintain their farms and get more efficient?
3. How can they improve their income to have a better life and take care of family health and

the education of their kids?

4. What can be done so that the next generation is taking over their parents' duty to manage the farms and have a decent income?
5. How can we support the cocoa farming communities to create hope for the future?

Christian Walter, Managing Director Consumer Foods
Bühler AG, Switzerland

Decision-making in a Ghanaian cocoa producing community

Decisions entail change. Sometimes enormous changes, sometimes small changes. But what precisely is a decision? There has been a discussion about the definitions of an action and a decision for decades. Schimank (2005:45-47)* argues that there are different options of actions. *Emotional actions* are a spontaneous, impetus reaction of an actor. *Traditional actions* are actions based on cognitive and normative expectations that originate from the society and *social routines* declare guidelines for humans – formalized codes of conducts. In contrast to these actions he - inspired by Luhmann - defines a decision



as an action which is chosen consciously and after evaluating alternatives (Schimank 2005). A society that changes because it decides after evaluating alternatives is therefore a *decisional society*.

Looking at a Ghanaian cocoa producing community: Are there indicators of transformation towards a decisional society? And, is the culture of decision-making in cocoa producing communities changing?

A little stone hits the goat that is trying to eat out of the pot filled with palm nut soup. A mother is rebuking her son of being rude. Undisputed - these emotional actions have not been taken under consideration of alternatives. But they are human and therefore shape the character of a society. Traditions are a very important part of daily life in Ghana. Normative and cognitive expectations like the woman as the person who pulls the strings. The irreplaceable and sometimes underestimated figure who cares about the children, the household and social life is firmly anchored in the Ghanaian culture. It has always been like that. So is the weekly attendance at Church. Of course, Ghanaian communities also have a conduct of behaviour which they follow. They set up rules of helping someone out of danger as almost every other community does.

As the world becomes more and more global and cocoa producing communities increasingly depend on global concerns like the demand for cocoa, the fluctuating cocoa prices and the value-chain conditions multinational enterprises and Governments determine the importance of efficiency and effectiveness grows. Not only global dynamics concerning cocoa but also the aspiration of a better life provoke changes in cocoa producing communities. These evaluations of alternatives is based upon the concept of rationality (Schimank 2005:53), which gains continuously importance.

Group decisions are a feature of decision-making in Ghana - whether in community development committees or microfinance groups. Therefore, microfinance may serve as an example. Traditionally the man was in charge of the business and consequently he was the one who normally traded the

cocoa and dealt with the finances. Projects like the Village Savings & Loans Associations of Care International influence the traditional structures. Here, women can take loans and reinvest the money. Aspirants have to defend the purpose of investment, which shows the evaluation of alternative decision-making. This process is what Schimank would call a decision of a decisional society.

Ghanaians face ever more decisions as opportunities to work in different sectors arise. Moreover, trainings by NGOs and multinational enterprises help professionalize cocoa farming. The weighing between alternatives can be seen more frequently because of external and internal changes.

In conclusion: Decision-making is still influenced by traditions, however changing. There are various forms of participation in decision-making processes as committees and projects foster change and confirm cocoa producing communities as decisional bodies. There is also great potential for more heterogeneous and deliberative decision-making, but it will be challenged and modified by various aspects. The ageing society forces the cocoa producing community to react and to decide. Furthermore, the tempting option of working in a different more lucrative sector (e.g. gold mining). Also external pressure like low market prices for cocoa will entail more and more significant decisions and consequences. Over and above this, decisions by big players such as the cocoa processing and confectionary industry and the Government of Ghana regulating cocoa production and trade will force the cocoa communities to weigh their options, and re-act. No matter how circumstances change there will be significant decisions that will challenge existing decision-making structures more and more; thus, the future of the entire value chain and the communities producing cocoa beans.

Charlotte Knull, MSc Student, University of Bremen

*Schimank, Uwe (2005): Die Entscheidungsgesellschaft. Komplexität und Rationalität der Moderne.

Development? A Matter of Choice and Basic Security



Kwasí grew up in a little village with 40 clay huts, without electricity, by then. He used to begin his mornings by fetching water from the well, carrying a 20-liter-bucket on his head, and getting some fire wood to cook the morning stew with plantain or cassava. In the morning, he went to the village school. In the afternoon, he joined his family in the cocoa plantation, plucking and opening cocoa pods, fermenting and drying cocoa beans, harvesting plantain or cassava. After the evening meal he was strolling around with the other children of the village in the moonlight before going to sleep on his thin bedding. Kwasí, one of the best students in primary school, got a grant for secondary school at a small town some 150 km from his home village. It takes him nearly a whole day to travel there. He still is among the best students. He hopes for another grant to study technical engineering – at Oxford University! He told me so in a very self-evident and persuasive way. Nowadays, he only returns to his native village during holidays and helps his grandmother harvesting as he used to do. Is it sure that Kwasí will end up as a technical engineer in Oxford? Not at all!

If he does not get the grant he needs, he also may end up like the other schoolboy living in Maame Yaas house who cannot afford secondary school; thus helps on the farm and in the house. This boy will not have any other future than picking cocoa pods. If someone in Kwasi's family gets ill seriously, also Kwasi will have to stay and help. But he now knows about the chances that this world offers. He has opened a window. I hope he will make his way and be happy in both worlds: in the simple life of the cocoa village where he rose up – and in the globalized world where a son of cocoa farmers can become an engineer with Oxford Diploma.

Most of the village people are born here, they live in their village and they probably will die in their village. They are born as cocoa farmers – and they will die as cocoa farmers. Of course the idea of choice has found its way into the schools. And to a school girl or boy in 2017 in a Ghanaian village, it is no longer obvious to see her or his life as pre-determined by cocoa farming. They learn about the world around their village. But most of them will not have the opportunity of choice. Most of them will not be able to leave the village, not even to go to the secondary school in the next small town, as long as secondary school costs money. Seeing other ways of living and not having the choice is hard. And the gap between rural life and life in towns is huge.

Our host lady, Maame Yaa, had a different idea – but no means to follow her choice. She once used to trade in frozen fish but stopped upon her husband's death. She then put up a simple one-room building in the center of the village to be used as a coldstore. This could grant her an alternative livelihood opportunity. But she lacks the money to buy a deep freezer. What, if CARE or another development agent would give her the choice to do so – and improve life in the village and the life of an old cocoa farmer lady?

Life is fragile in the village. In a year with good yields and rather humid weather daily life is assured by cultivating cassava, plantain and maize. But if there is drought, subsistence becomes difficult, and there is no spare money to bridge the gap. A case of severe illness in the family – and the whole family has to suffer. Maame Yaa is the best example: When her husband died, she had to give up her small business that allowed her to live without having to go to the plantations. There is no social security net. Death of a close relative means enormous cost to the family. If the motorcycle breaks or is being stolen, the access to the next market is cut. The very deep religiousness most of the people show was very understandable to me considering that at any time of their life they are in the hands of fortune – or in the hands of God.



To me, what was missing most to the people in the village was not first of all safe water, lightening in every house, fridges; better houses, clean cooking stoves or even more money. It was choice and basic security; i.e. no longer being subordinated to the birth place and to one only-activity, to the hazards of life, to the choices that others do for you.

There is no single key to change things. Development means not only electrifying villages and giving access to clean and safe water. It means creating jobs and alternative ways of earning money – and perhaps not only the ones that the NGO currently around identifies. Giving access to loans. It means implementing insurance schemes that protect, e.g. from climate change or diseases. Educating people. Teaching them business opportunities. Free secondary education so that up-ward mobility is

no longer reserved to the richer people. It means giving the people who live in rural areas secure land titles so that they invest in their own businesses. Making the villages attractive for younger people so that they would like to stay and not go for work to the defacto-slums in the cities.

Our Exposure facilitator – a student of agriculture – instilled my hope. She symbolizes the future of her country: Proud of her heritage and village origin, well-educated, knowing about the value of cocoa farming. People like her can drive change – and make life of cocoa farmers better.

Karen Pfundt, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Cocoa Farmers' life in Tweapease – an unexpected encounter

I have to admit that – to some degree, we have not met our host's expectations in the little [village of Tweapease](#) we visited. We, that is *DEVEX* West Africa correspondent Christin Roby, and me. Our host lady and her sister were not completely unhappy with us, but we caused irritation. It was the moment when in the early morning [a man \(me\) was carrying a bucket of water on his head](#) and a woman (Christin) was videoing and doing interviews. To our hosts, walking this stretch of almost a mile to the water hole and return with (up to 50 liters of) water on one's head is clearly women's (but not men's) work!



However, disregarding this confusion in the morning we almost immediately really felt being a family altogether. Our family was tremendously accommodating, actually showing self-abandonment. Offering us showers twice a day – which we luckily refused even before we really knew where the water was coming from, and how it had to be brought to the house as explained above.

Becoming a member of Ghanaian family life is for sure the most exciting personal experience we made. It does not mean that family life is separated from meeting daily needs and tackling various constraints. [We actually realized many of them.](#) Even such things which seem to work out fine, at first sight, are not as smooth as one may think from our perspective: Having access to water in the village; instable electricity supply; lack of teaching materials at schools; want of cocoa seedlings; herbicides, pesticides, fertilizer not being available in due time; questionable land tenure; youth unemployment, and last, but not least, matters of life or death conditioned by the [digital gap](#).

It was outstanding to meet a young man handicapped by a severe injury which left his right arm devoid of power and wobbling around. On the first evening he stopped by awhile with his pushbike and said his hellos to everybody. He was very warmly greeted by everyone in the family. Later, my host "mother" told us that he spent some years in Italy where he got injured when trying to escape from a roundup. He had to travel back since he could not pay for proper treatment. Moreover, there was no insurance coverage for him. I immediately had a feeling that this very first visit was nothing but the prelude to another encounter the following day. And rightly so: On the next evening he came back again – and again he was in the middle of everybody's attention when he talked to us for the first time. We still do not know why exactly and how he had left his home and went to Italy. Such are harsh and painful memories nobody wanted to touch upon carelessly. However, that night we

realized that he brought some treasures from Europe which all of the villagers noticed with envy and admiration and which – combined with his personal life story – made him such a unique person in his village. Surprisingly, these treasures were a validated local bus ticket from Napels (Italy), two Italian stamps (not validated), a business card from a lawyer (who he probably never met in person) and a small bookmark picturing the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Stefan Ewers, Member of the Board, CARE Deutschland-Luxemburg

EDP – Development has got a face

Exposure and Dialogue Programmes are offers for further training and dialogue to promote sustainable and responsible acting carried out in developing and newly industrialized countries. They enable management staff and decision-makers from field of politics, business, church and civil society to have intense encounters and dialogues with people living in poverty.

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