

Land Use and Land Resource Management at Gyamfiase-Adenya, Ghana

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SUMMARY

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded the United Nations University project on *People, Land Management and Environmental Change* (UNU/PLEC) 1998-2002. The project aimed at biodiversity conservation in small farms. The purpose was enhancement of food security, rural livelihoods and environmental integrity. PLEC adopted a win-win scenario. Project key players were small farmers, multidisciplinary scientists and policy agents. Their collaborative work took place at 100 sq km demonstration site. The case in point is Gyamfiase-Adenya demonstration site in Ghana. Farm holdings were between one and eight unit farms per farmer. Farms barely exceeded 2 ha. Farms were reasonably close to farmers' permanent residences. Farmers were organized under an association. Members exchange knowledge and cultivars. Farmers kept biodiverse agroforestry farms, home gardens and backyard forests. Farmers had regenerated agro-forest from grass-covered land at Bewase and Duasin. They maintained group nurseries as well as individual commercial plant nurseries. Individual ventures were more successful. They also tended a sacred grove, group and individual citrus farms. Vegetation transitional sequence, forest-to-cropped land-to-grass vegetation was evident at part of the sacred grove slashed for farming. The sacred grove suffered resource abuse. Some farmers undertook snail and fish farming. Initial snail harvest was quite encouraging. The association's swine dispersal project was saddled with problems. PLEC scientists introduced farmers to split corm and mini sett techniques for plantain and yam propagation respectively. They also identified and selected exceptionally successful farmers in biodiversity conservation on-farm as expert farmers. Their farms were biodiversity conservation epitome for other farmers and school children. Expert farmers also served as farming consultants. PLEC scientists and expert farmers participated in plant policy formulation meetings. Policy agents drew from their rich indigenous knowledge. A scientist donated cassava-grating machine to the farmers' association. Indigenous farmers are successful land resource managers. They are motivated by economic incentives. When this is nil land resources suffer abuse. Generally, association members have sustainably improved their food security, livelihoods and environment.