



# Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project

## Annual Report

### Project Recap

The Northern Region has the highest poverty rates in Ghana, affecting 1.3 million people. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries are the major occupations in the region, with 73.5% of those in employment working in these sectors. Due to its geographic position, agriculture in northern Ghana is vulnerable to desertification and the effects of the climate crisis and agriculture is becoming a less stable source of food and income for rural households. Rural women and youth in Ghana are particularly vulnerable to poverty due to their inadequate access to land and credit, even though women play an important role in the management of shea trees, sustaining the shea industry and land restoration.

There is a high number of shea trees in the Northern Region, but trees are not always exploited sustainably. In fact, almost 8 million shea trees are lost across West Africa each year due to factors such as deforestation through agricultural expansion and currently illegal logging. Shea trees produce nutritious fruits, and nuts which can be processed into butter for use in cooking and cosmetics. 99% of globally exported shea comes from West Africa, and there is a huge potential for this natural resource to support rural households living in poverty.

This project will work with communities, particularly women, in the Northern Region of Ghana to restore shea parklands, develop cooperatives and strengthen shea value chains. The project aims to support communities to grow and plant both shea and non-shea trees to help restore vital land, and support enterprise development activities for local women.

### Key Project Information

**Timescale:** September 2022 to June 2025

**Project location:** Gushiegu, Mion, and Yendi Districts, Northern Ghana

**Donor:** Global Shea Alliance (GSA)

**Match funding partners:** Ecosia and Soroptomist International '100 x Trees for Life'

**Total project budget:** \$600,000

### Update on Recent Activities

This report covers activities that have taken place during the first year of the project, from October 2022 – June 2023.

## **Output 1: Restore and sustainably manage shea parkland**

The project is supporting communities to raise shea seedlings in 4 community nurseries. As previously reported, the project focused on 2 nurseries for the first 6 months: Lakaldo and Latagim, which are nurseries established by a previous Tree Aid project. Both nurseries have been upgraded during this project to align with Global Shea Alliance standards, including expansion, solar pump installation, and the installation of shade nets. The water systems at both nurseries consist of mechanized boreholes with 2 poly tanks installed at each nursery. Solar powered pumps have been installed to drive water from the boreholes to the tanks where the water is being stored and used for watering of seedlings and nutrition gardens. The nurseries which have been fenced with chain-links with iron poles erected to provide anchorage and stability. Some of the iron poles which were weak or damaged have been replaced, and the chain-links reinforced. The total average area of each nursery is 3180msq. A team of representatives from GSA visited the completed nurseries on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 to approve the standard of the sites. For the 2nd quarter of 2023, the 2 new nurseries have also now been established and have received mechanised water delivery systems, poly tanks, tools and equipment for nursery tree seedling production. The installation of the nurseries water delivery system was completed in May 2023. This brings to a total of 4 nurseries standardised and they are being used for tree seedlings production. All nurseries have signages installed. The total number of women elected by the community to work in the nurseries is now 40, representing 10 from each of the nurseries.

Unfortunately, the start date of the project was after the shea season. Some poly pots were seeded nevertheless, however the survival rate was not as strong as hoped. A total of 650 healthy shea seedlings were produced in the project nurseries, and a further 10,000 were produced in other nurseries and have been moved to the project nurseries to be used for training on shea grafting.

Due to the 2022 missed target, together with the targets for 2023 and 2024, a revised aim was agreed to produce 140,000 shea seedlings during the 2023 growing season so that sufficient seedlings will be planted in 2024 to meet targets. To date, 168,000 poly pots have been filled and seeded with shea seeds. The seeds are in various stages of sprouting. Between April and June 2023, the project facilitated the production of 63,000 non-shea seedlings in the nurseries, with species including ceiba, mahogany, cassia, local mango, cashew, baobab, and moringa. Over 300,000 non shea seedlings have also been grown in local nurseries supported by another Tree Aid private partner project and are all ready to be planted out, which will take place after monitoring and approval by GSA.

Initial mapping of potential parkland has also taken place using the ODK land perimeter mapping tool. This estimated that approximately 1617ha of land would be available for the project, with more land areas and communities left to be mapped over the coming months.

During the reporting period, 200 female extension volunteers were identified and elected across the 30 communities of the project operational areas. A total of 205 (171 women and 34 men) project participants were trained on agroforestry practices, SWC, best agronomic practices, agro silvo pastoral land use, and general shea tree growing and management to also train their fellow women. The training was successfully done with practical demonstrations. A follow up focus group discussion will be done to assess the cascading of the training sessions at the community levels.

## **Output 2: Strengthen value chains for shea processing**

As previously reported 26 women's Village Tree Enterprise groups (VTEs) were identified to form the 3 project Cooperative Unions between October and December 2022. Between April and June 2023, 6 VTEs in 4 communities have been trained on cooperative development by the Department of Cooperatives. The training was attended by 130 people in total (121 women and 9 men). Training covered topics such as group formation, importance of belonging to groups, gender dimension in group formation, leadership, conflicts and management, group sustainability and solidarity, group commitments, and contracts. The training of these cooperative societies was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare and Department of Cooperatives including department of Agriculture. The aim of the project is that the

societies will be given capacity building training to upgrade them into District Cooperatives (Cooperative Unions).

All 26 VTEs who are undertaking the VSLA activities have also received training on group dynamics and cooperative governance. As and when the remaining 4 VTE groups are formed, training will be conducted for them as well so that all the cooperatives receive comparative capacity building opportunities. Steps are being taken to form the remaining 4 groups. Sensitisation has taken place in 3 communities, and 3 potential women's groups have been identified to form the VTEs as a result. The training was conducted in collaboration with staff from the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare and the Department of Agriculture, and a training manual was also produced. The contents of the manual were discussed with the facilitators at a pre-training meeting where the plan and methodology for the training was thoroughly discussed. Community-level training and subsequent discussions were moderated by facilitators to ensure equal and fair participation and were made accessible to all with pictures, flip charts, and other materials. A total of 563 people (521 women and 42 men) participated in the training.

Training has also taken place in 10 project communities on improved, fuel-efficient cook stove production and use. Improved cook stoves at least 50% less wood than traditional stoves. Their adoption can contribute to a reduction of fuel wood consumption and produce less smoke during the cooking process. A total of 285 people took part in the training (243 women and 42 men.) Since the training, 293 cook stoves have already been produced.

### Update on KPIs (women's development)

Activity	Annual Target	Achieved
Nurseries established	4	4
Women employed at nurseries	40	40
VTE groups established	30	26
Cooperatives trained on group dynamics & cooperative governance	30	26

### Challenges

- A rainstorm almost destroyed the shade nets erected at Lakaldo community nursery. The nursery women together with other members of the community worked together to reinforce the nets to mitigate against any further damage.
- The challenges faced whilst raising shea seedlings at the beginning of the project have resulted in lessons learned that will help us to improve on our strategy and approaches moving forward.
- A prolonged period of drought in May and June 2023 created a situation where community members still busy hence limiting their availability to take part in other activities.

### Next steps

Here is an overview of activities that will be taking place during the second year of the project:

- Facilitate the planting of non-shea tree species.
- Train women of sustainable parkland management.
- Train women on shea aggregation, marketing, auditing, and warehousing.
- Train women on improved business management including contract management and market linkages.
- Support cooperatives with 2 shea processing centres and construct 1 warehouse.

## Photographs



*Head of Cooperative Development delivering training to women's groups*



*A trainer engaging women in Namoni community on how to construct fuel efficient stoves*



*Women constructing fuel efficient stoves in Latagim community*



*Women constructing fuel efficient stoves in Binagmando community*



*Facilitators engaging participants at the sustainable parklands management training for female extension volunteers*



*Facilitators engaging participants at the sustainable parklands management training for female extension volunteers*



*Shea seedlings being raised in polypots at the Binagmando community nursery*



*Polypots of shea seedlings arranged at Binagmando community nursery*



*Women manually processing shea butter at Latagim community*



*Women manually processing shea butter at Latagim community – without processing equipment it is a very labour intensive and lengthy process*

### **Thank You**

Thank you very much to Soroptimist International's 100 x Trees for Life initiative for supporting this important project.

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