

Tree Aid Ghana

BRIEF REPORT OF DUTCH SOROPTIMIST SUPPORT, July 2025

Introduction

Tree Aid, in partnership with the Global Shea Alliance, the Forestry Commission of Ghana, UNDP and with funding from the Green Climate Fund, continue to strive in supporting communities to restore their shea parklands that provides a lot of ecosystem services hence contributing build resilience to climate variabilities.

The Output Two of the project is being managed by the Global Shea Alliance with its network members. Tree Aid implements part of the Output 2, Activity 1 which focuses on tree planting and parkland restoration and Output 2, Activity 2, which focus on cooperative development. The Dutch Soroptimists are funding Output 2, Activity 2 of the project, and this support is having a meaningful impact on the community, especially among women and youth.

A. Dutch Soroptimist earlier support to cooperatives

Over the past two years, the Dutch Soroptimists have significantly contributed to the empowerment of women in the shea value chain through the provision of critical training, infrastructure development and equipment.

i. Building of Warehouses:



Two warehouses, each with a capacity of 75 tons, have been constructed in Manyini and Gmafudo villages. They are equipped with pallets to reduce post-harvest and storage losses, weighing scales, and tarpaulins for drying. In addition, women cooperative members have received capacity-building support to ensure effective use and management of the facilities. This support has contributed to strengthening the collection and storage of shea nuts, allowing for more strategic sales at favourable prices and improved income generation.

Figure 1: Equipped warehouse in Gmafodo community

ii. Establishment of shea processing centers:

Two fully equipped shea butter processing centres have been established in Manyini and Gmafudo villages for the cooperative unions. Each centre is fitted with mechanised shea kernel crushers, roasters, millers, kneading basins, boilers, and electric motors. These centres were

made possible through community contributions of land and labour. The equipment has significantly improved production capacity, enabling large-scale shea butter processing in a shorter time to meet market demand. It has also reduced the physical burden on women by replacing manual processing and has contributed to improved consistency and quality of the shea butter produced.



Figure 2: Shea kernal miller



Figure 3: Shea kernal crusher



Figure 4: Shea pump kneader with electric motor

Support for the collection and transport of produce:



Figure 5: cargo motor tricycle

Additionally, two cargo motor tricycles were provided to the cooperatives in Manyini and Gmafudo villages to support the collection and transport of produce to and from the storage centres. These vehicles are operated by women, contributing to both practical efficiency and social empowerment.

This timely and essential support has increased women's commitment and strengthened their role within the cooperatives, while also improving collaboration with other actors in the shea value chain. Women now have a stronger voice in their communities and are actively participating in local decision-making processes.

Importantly, the cargo tricycles also serve broader community needs by providing transport for residents to nearby markets and villages. Most notably, they are used to transport women in labour and other sick individuals to the nearest health clinics, offering a critical lifeline in times of medical need.

Tree Aid continues support

We are pleased to report that since the handover of the various facilities, Tree Aid has continued to monitor progress and provide support to ensure the cooperatives are making full use of the resources provided. This ongoing engagement has strengthened the women's confidence in using the facilities effectively. Notably, their participation in community-level banking through the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) has increased, resulting in strong annual share-out amounts.

B. Dutch Soroptimist more recent support

i. Additional shea processing centre for Tesosung Cooperative Union

More recently, the Dutch Soroptimists again demonstrated its dedication to the women's groups by funding the establishment of a third shea butter processing center for the Tesosung Cooperative Union, located in the Gushegu Municipality of the Northern Region. The shea processing centre received mechanized shea kernel crushers, roasters, millers, kneaders basins, boilers, electrical motors) with community contribution of land and labour. This centre is newly built with an electricity supply. It is anticipated that with the recent shea nuts season, women will collect more of the kernels and process them in the centre for improved sales and income.



Figure 6: Shea kernel crushers and miller



Figure 7: Shea processing factory

While the Tesosung Cooperative Union is deeply grateful for this support, a few challenges are currently limiting the center's full potential.

Some challenges remain:

- Lack of a motor cargo tricycle needed to transport raw materials and processed products between the Tesosung Cooperative Union center and surrounding communities.
- Inadequate water supply – a dedicated water facility is essential to support efficient processing and hygiene standards.
- No Storage Facility – construction of a warehouse for the collection and storage of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), particularly shea nuts, in which the community has a

strong comparative advantage would significantly improve quality control, expand storage capacity, and strengthen access to higher-value markets.

ii. Building of solar mechanized boreholes:

As the saying goes, water is life. Cooperative members in Manyini and Gmafudo villages previously spent significant time walking long distances to fetch water from rivers or a few nearby boreholes—many of which frequently broke down. Access to water is especially critical for shea butter processing, which requires large quantities and is often constrained in remote areas. In response to community requests, two mechanized boreholes were drilled and equipped with solar-powered pumps and water storage tanks (polytanks), with support from the Dutch Soroptimists. Both facilities have been completed, successfully tested, and are now fully operational, ensuring reliable access to water for both household and processing needs.



Figure 8: Solar mechanized borehole 1



Figure 9: Solar mechanized borehole 2

Conclusion

The women sincerely thank the Dutch Soroptimists for their steadfast support, which has played a vital role in helping rural communities in Ghana to recover from climate shocks and advance environmental sustainability, gender empowerment, and local economic development. These interventions are already making a tangible difference in the lives of the cooperative members and their communities.

Additional Photos



Figure 4: Solar mechanised water system for Nsuidom cooperative union shea processing unit at Manyini community.



Figure 5: Solar mechanized system for the Suglo-Gnang cooperative union shea processing unit in Gmanfudo community



Figure 6: Drilling activity and installed borehole system

