

Asana's story: a Northern Ghanaian maize farmer looks to the future



For more than a decade, Asana Iddi Cherigudoo, from the Northern community of Sang, cultivated maize at a subsistence level. At the end of each agricultural year, she typically harvested four bags of maize. Unfortunately, this was never enough to feed her family through the year ahead. Like many other smallholder farmers in Northern Ghana, Asana lacked access to inputs and services that might enable her to produce more food for her household, sell a surplus, and grow her efforts beyond the half-acre field she could cultivate by hand.

The DFID-funded Market Development (MADE) Programme for Northern Ghana launched in 2013 to address the challenges faced by Asana and thousands of farmers like her. MADE works with agribusiness partner firms to ensure smallholder farmers gain access to the right quality of inputs and services they need to improve their productivity, yields, incomes and livelihoods.

Asana is a member of the women's group Kuli Noli Din Viella ("Farming Business is Beneficial") and in 2017, her group met a MADE partner called MS Bonsu Farms. This agribusiness provided the group, as well as other farmers in Sang and surrounding Mion District, with a bundle of inputs and services on credit to increase their productivity and yields. The bundle included improved

seeds, fertiliser, ploughing by tractor, extension and harvesting services. At the end of the season, MS Bonsu Farms also bought back the farmers' produce, providing them with a clear end market.



“Working with female smallholder farmers is rewarding. They only require a little assistance to make a big impact on their families and community. Input repayment amongst women is also high as they strive to protect their reputation.”

Mohammed Sualisu,
Managing Director of MS Bonsu Farms

The support enabled Asana to grow her farm from half an acre to two acres in 2018. This step up, combined with her access to inputs on credit and farm extension services, meant that she could multiply her harvest from four to 24 bags of maize.

“Farming was tedious and unattractive for the women of Sang. We did not have money to pay for tractor services. We were limited to cultivating half-acre size plots of land for sustenance. Now, I have produced more maize to feed my family, repaid my loan and sold the remainder for income. I am now able to pay my children's school fees and contribute to our group's savings scheme.”

Asana Iddi Cherigudoo

Access to credit provided by MS Bonsu Farms through Sinapi Aba Savings and Loans Limited in 2019 will help more than 1,300 smallholder farmers in the district raise their productivity – including Asana. Asana and the 29 other members of Kuli Noli Din Viella have set their sights on increasing the size of their farms and their yields, and earning more money to supplement their family budgets. Asana is very hopeful for the future. “Things keep improving as we work with MS Bonsu,” she says. “I look forward to the day when I can cultivate 10 acres of land, which will give me more money to see my seven children through tertiary education.”



MADE is helping farmers like Asana (not pictured) use inputs effectively for the best possible returns.



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Find out more about the MADE Programme, our work and our partners:

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