

Overview

The Learning Platform was held in Kade on 11 July 2017 at the Pentecost Central Church Hall. It was held under the auspices of the consortium¹ of the Inclusive Value Chain Collaboration project, financed by NWO-Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, WOTRO Science for Global Development and the Lindt Cocoa Foundation.

The theme for the 2017 learning platform was “Landscape Changes, Challenges and Innovation”. The platform specifically addressed issues and questions relating to landscape changes, climate change and others.

The learning platform is a local-level arena designed as a knowledge co-creation and collaborative learning process involving multiple disciplines and stakeholders who bring perspectives, experience and expertise together to identify, address, share ideas and provide possible solutions to numerous problems or issues that farmers are facing. The platform also seeks to combine scientific and local knowledge to undertake action and effect change.

The idea of the learning platform is meant to create opportunity for peer-to-peer learning through cross-level knowledge exchange that creates space for innovation in ways that enhance farmers’ autonomy and empowerment.

The 2017 learning platform brought together stakeholders and experts from the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR), University of Amsterdam (UvA), Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Forest Service Division (FSD), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), extension officers, the Cocoa Health Services Division (CHED) of the Ghana Cocoa Board (Cocobod), journalists, Licence Buying Companies for cocoa, farmers and others. This provided an excellent opportunity for networking and sharing experiences in the cocoa value chain and other food crops like rice and cabbage. The platform attracted participant registrations of 52 and 11 members forming the WOTRO team.

Introduction

Dr. Mirjam Ros-Tonen (the coordinator of the Inclusive VCC project) gave a brief overview in her introductory address of the learning platform organized last year. She said the theme for last year’s platform was “Brokering for Innovation and Change Makers”. Some individuals were identified as change makers and there was a live interview with change makers, including Mr Swanzy of OPRI and others. The participants jointly defined a change maker as “someone who brings new ideas that help change peoples’ or farmers’ life or someone who does something

¹ The consortium consists of the University of Amsterdam and the Royal Tropical Institute from the Netherlands, the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) and the Ghana Agricultural Associations Business and Information Centre (GAABIC) from Ghana, and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and University of Limpopo from South Africa.

differently either in farming, in practices, or in dealing with farmers generally'. Kakraa had presented her research findings on agricultural policies for validation with the farmers. This helped her to answer her questions well. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions that bothered them concerning the research findings and agricultural policies in general. There was a presentation by Anna on the results of innovations from below and what impressed her most was a soap maker who transformed her soap to resemble Omo. She said the farmers also had a couple of recommendations for the WOTRO team which have been addressed. One of the farmers' major concerns was issues relating to climate change and that is the reason behind the choice of the theme for the 2017 learning platform **“Landscape Changes, Challenges and Innovations”**..

She said researchers are going to give a talk on landscape change and the shifting cocoa belt to address farmers' concern on the topic. She added that, in order for the farmers and participants to keep record of the programme, a brochure will be given to the participants to remember and share the information with their community members and others who did not get the chance to attend the learning platform.

She said that this year's learning platform is not only concerned about their farms, but will go beyond their farms to cover the broader landscape. Among the reasons for doing so is that farmers do not depend only on their farms for their livelihood, but also on other benefits from the landscape such as water, non-timber forest products and others. Also, it is good to look at the landscape because farming and the expansion of tree crops affect the landscape. Landscape change can be a change for the better (e.g. more tree crops means higher income) or a change for the worse (e.g. landscape degradation and deforestation as a result of which there are less NTFPs). It is therefore important to look at how landscape changes affect farmers' livelihood.

She continued with the outline of the programme for the day including;

- Introduction
- Presentation by Andrea with examples of innovations that she identified during her research in Tapa and Kade.
- There will be live interviews involving change makers.
- This will be followed by a panel discussion with the institutions.
- Presentation by Kwabena on the results of his research in the Eastern Region on how the landscape has changed there. She emphasized that it is not only climate change that brings changes in the landscape, but also deforestation, increase in population and its corresponding pressure on the use of resources.
- We will finally consider participants' take home messages and recommendations.

She thanked the participants for their attention.

Landscape Innovations in Practice

Two live interviews with Rose Asare Sintim and Janet Nyarko as change makers were facilitated by Dr. Anna and Kakraa.

Anna explained that the above individuals were identified as change makers for the 2017 Learning Platform during Andrea's research on landscape changes and innovation in Kade. She said she will ask them some questions about what they do and why they were identified as change makers. The participants can also write their questions down and ask them afterwards.

1. Rose Asare Sintim (Assembly Woman at Adankrono)

Anna asked Madam Rose to briefly explain her role as an Assemblywoman.

Rose used the opportunity to welcome everyone and thanked the organizers for the opportunity given to her on the special event. She said she represents her community at the District Assembly as an Assemblywoman and her main duty is to serve her community to ensure development. Since she fights for the interest of her community, the members of the community come to her for assistance. She is the first point of call when people encounter problems and in anything that has to do with the community, community members and the district assembly. She also associates herself with the chief who traditionally owns the community to seek for development and welfare of the community members. She said people from outside often perceived that an Assembly member is more knowledgeable, but that is never so since all of them learn from each other. Also, you have to be matured as an Assembly member.

Anna- we know you do a lot of things, can you mention some interventions you have achieved in relation to landscape changes in your community?

Rose-

1. Healthy living is very important because you require a healthy community to undertake any development project; therefore she has opened a drug store in the community where people can easily get recommended drugs when they are sick.
2. She has helped to provide borehole and water pipes to a section of her community and nearby villages where they used to face water problems.
3. She has lobbied to establish a modern 14 seater toilet facilities for the community with water accessibility. This was achieved through negotiation for assistance from NGOs and other donors.
4. She has collaborated with Zoomlion Ghana Limited (a waste management company in Ghana) to stop indiscriminate disposal of waste materials by providing dustbins both within and around the community to ensure good health and growth.
5. Fighting galamsey to stop destruction of their landscape resulting in diseases outbreak, destruction to water bodies and other livelihoods activities like food crops and cash crop farms.

She added that she was able to achieve this because of her good negotiation and lobbying skills which allows collaboration with more partners for community development.

2. Janet Nyarko - soap making and Assemblywoman at Abaam

Anna-what made you to start training people in soap making.

Janet welcomed all the participants and said she is into soap making. She learned this profession from her father, who is in Côte d'Ivoire. She said she has taken it upon herself over the past two years to train women and youths especially those who are not academically enthused as well as those who do not have money to go to school. She organizes training workshops for as many people as she can in their various communities. She emphasized that soap is the second most important commodity after food hence should not be taken for granted. She said it is very easy especially for women to engage in the soap making business because it is not tedious and is done manually. She said all the materials for soap production are available in Kade including palm oil, burnt cocoa pods, soda and other chemicals. The materials are not expensive. She said her reason for training interested people is to help reduce social vices like teenage pregnancy and also reduce unemployment rate among the youths and women.

Questions for change makers

Anna opened the floor for the participants to ask the change makers questions.

Janet Aweriwa-Do you collect money for training the people? What is the duration of the training?

Janet-There is no payment, the training is free of charge however, each participant pays 5 Ghana cedis for her upkeep including food and accommodation for the entire period of the training workshop. She said the training last for two (2) weeks in every community that she visits. Participants might have known how to make different kind of soaps by the end of the two weeks. She said, in order to reach out to all the communities under the Kwaebibirem district, she has divided the whole district into five zones. She has so far covered two zones and will start the third zone which is Pramkese zone within this week. Her approach is to reach out to groups but not individuals in order to disseminate the profession to other people. So she always wants the participants to group themselves before inviting her for the training. So interested persons can organize themselves into groups and invite her for the training. She said, Pramkese is next on her schedule, and followed by Takyiman, Asuom and other communities. She said she gives certificates to her trainees after every training workshop.

Peter from Pramkese thanked Madam Janet on taking it upon herself to help people gain soap making skills to provide jobs for women and unemployed youths *but his question was -Where do you get market from? How do you market your soap? Do you have any company that buys your products?*

Janet-Our soap is unique and about 400 out of my 700 trainees produce and sell the soap. We have buyers from Accra, Kumasi, Burkina Faso and other places. There is a good market for my soap because it has unique branding and it also sells fast at least two weeks after production. Also my brand is mostly advertised in community/town information centre. Notwithstanding I still need more NGOs and Government organizations to support in order to expand my work for mother Ghana.

Vincent from Pramkese said he was very impressed about Madam Janet's dedication to training people on gaining skills in soap making. *He said he is a soap producer himself and wanted to know the kind of oil that she uses.*

Janet- I use oil from fresh palm fruit bunches. She the soap wouldn't look nice if you use the rotten or non-fresh oil.

Raymond from COCOBOD-*How is the galamsey issue being dealt with, because it is destroying our livelihoods?*

Rose-Government is making serious efforts in the against galamsey. Following this policy directive on banning galamsey, I met with my opinion leaders as an assemblywoman and we decreed to fight against the mining activities. We have banned and do not allow any operations of galamsey in our community. I plead that the mineral commission which gives clearance for galamsey operations should follow up for proper land-cover rehabilitation by the miners. She also added that all communities should ensure the mining operators have legal documents backing their activities and also make sure they follow guidelines strictly for win-win approach.

Dr. Danso from OPRI-*Is it challenging to be an Assemblywoman? If yes, what are some of the challenges that you face as an Assembly member as you rub shoulders with male counterparts?*

Rose-Yes, it is a great challenge to become an Assemblywoman. Aside this profession, I am a mother and perform other household chores as well career activities. It becomes a great challenge when lobbying for financial assistance. During my selection there were other able males who were much younger than I but still I was approved because the women and men saw that a woman naturally has empathy and more passion and kindness as compared to men and can take up more activities at the same time. I was accepted also based on my past activities with the communities.

Samuel Koomson from Pramkese said although, the government has publicly banned the galamsey operations in his observation, there is lot of work to be done by the Assembly members if they can indeed stop the menace because people are doing it in the Kade area. **Rose** responded that it is not only responsibility of the district assembly or assembly members to fight against galamsey activities but also everybody's responsibility to help stop the illegal mining activities. She added that it is time that we are all come together as a community to fight against galamsey. Janet added that chiefs in some communities are behind the activities of galamsey, so the chiefs

and the traditional authorities must be seriously involved in the fight against galamsey since they are custodians and in charge of our community land.

Mr. Providence from the District Assembly clarified that we have an Assembly member but not Assemblywoman or man and that everyone irrespective of gender has the right to contest for the Assembly member position. He also added that the community has the power to stop the galamsey activities because the people live with these illegal members, they know them and are the best position to stop them. He also advised that, if anyone comes to their community with legal document from the mineral commission, the community has the power to sit with the miners and ask them to provide the mining guidelines for everyone to know their rights and responsibilities in the guidelines so that they can held the miners accountable if they fail to cover the pits or default the guidelines. They can also stop the mining if they perceive that the negatives outcomes may outweigh the positive results from the mining. He added that there are NGOs that fight against illegal mining and the community members can solicit for help of these NGOs for their claims.

Swanzy from OPRI- What positive or negatives changes have you experienced in your life as change makers?

Rose-Positive change is my ability to connect with a lot of NGOs which support the needs of women especially and everyone in general. Another change is honour that is been given to me even to invite me as a woman to speak in front of well abled men.

Janet-I see blessings from what I do (in Ghana, people pray for you when you help them or do well to them) and God blesses you a lot.

Last Words

Rose-firstly, I see officials of the Forestry Commission present, so I appeal to them to help people in tree planting, they should train people on when and how to plant the seedlings after providing the seedlings to the people. She asked for collaboration between the Forest Service Division and the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) in the tree planting exercise in order to reduce the heavy storms that they normally experience. She also appealed to the COCOBOD to make their scholarship scheme become available to the farmers in communities instead of giving it to people who are not even cocoa farmers.

Janet- I need more support from individuals and NGOs to expand my work in reaching out to more people for the training and workshop. This will help to avoid social vices, and to reduce unemployment.

Regina from the Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) of the FC said she was very happy that the Rose appealed to the Forestry Commission for seedlings of tree species for planting and motivate people to engage in tree planting. She however said, the government has

put in place a policy that protects the farmers and that they now own any tree that they plant in their farm. They shouldn't therefore wait for the FSD to provide them seedlings before they start planting trees but should look for some of the seedlings and plant. Because they harvest these trees after they are matured, they only need to acquire permit from the Forestry Commission.

First Presentation _Andrea and Sammy on changing landscapes and innovations from below

Some of the landscape changes in Tewa were present in Kade. However, there were some differences in some of the landscape changes which were not present in both study locations (Tewa and Kade **ie. See Andrea's presentation**). A lot of innovations from below were identified in dealing with the landscape changes in both Tewa and Kade which were presented to the participants (also **See Andrea's presentation**). In their presentation, they actively involved the farmers especially the innovators to tell us their own innovation and this received much attention. She stressed with the water filtration innovation, the participants should be careful when using the water because chemicals used in mining activities still remain in the water. She also explained that the water is not clean for drinking, bathing and even sometimes for crops because of the presence of some heavy metals. The participants asked a lot of questions after the presentation, including the following:

How are farmers shifting from cocoa to rice and cabbage cultivation in Tewa?

Andrea responded that an expert in climate change gave a presentation during the Tewa learning platform. He explained that, the climatic suitability for cocoa cultivation has declined over the years and may continue to decline; this is why the farmers are shifting towards rice and cabbage cultivation since they have land and river banks suitable for such crops during the dry and wet season.

Swanzy from OPRI asked if there won't be food reduction if the farmers practice the adaptation strategy of wide-spacing maize when planting.

Mr Ampofo from Adankrono where the innovation was identified responded that it is good to wide-space the planting distance against storms to destroy the maize rather than planting more maize seedlings in close-spacing which will be easily destroyed by heavy storms when the rain falls. In summary, half a loaf is better than none. The wide-spacing even helps them to get bigger maize and good yield.

Swanzy-I actually know that there are improved maize seedlings (different varieties) which are resistant to harsh climatic factors like storms that can be accessed at MoFA. So instead of wide-spacing, I suggest farmers go for such seedlings.

Martinson from MoFA responded that they as an institution want to see more yield and that, the farmers should consider the direction of the wind when planting to avoid destruction by the

storms. He added that farmers should always follow directives by MoFA on the number of maize seedlings per hole. He said a particular farmer followed their instruction by inserting one maize seed per hole and his maize was big and resistant to storms.

One participant also advocated for rubber plantation. He said climate change is actually affecting cocoa, oil palm and citrus and that rubber plantation is a good option to farmers because it can withstand the impacts of climate change and landscape changes.

Mr. Gabriel from the FSD said a good intervention for the storm that destroys maize farms is wind break establishment. There are certain species of plants that can serve as wind breaks and the farmers can plant some of these species. They can interplant them in their cocoa farms and even get revenue from the sale of the species.

The media man responded that today is his first time of hearing about the wind break establishment and that, if it is true then, the FSD should expand their horizon by educating people about these wind breaks and providing special species to help the famers.

Alhaji Bashir from GOPDC-are the wind break seedlings free? Have the FSD nursed enough seedlings to cover all the smallholder farmers within the district?

He further said that GOPDC has realized that oil palm doesn't thrive well on the upland and they started introducing rubber plantation in the upland areas. The seedlings are free of charge for the farmers and they are planning to establish a rubber factory next year. He said it is an outgrower scheme. He therefore advised the participants to advantage of the initiative.

Presentation by Kwabena Asubonteng on landscape change

He started by asking whether participants see changes in the landscape and almost all of them responded affirmatively.

He gave an overview of his findings on landscape changes in the Eastern Region of Ghana. He stressed that whatever happens within our landscape has a direct impact – either negative or positive – on our environment and farm.

In his presentation he compared a satellite map from the 1980s with one from 2015, showing the changes that occurred in the meantime. The changes had been confirmed in the field with the elderly. The maps revealed expansion of oil palm and cocoa at the cost of land available for food cropping. Deforestation occurred throughout the region, but forest has remained intact in the government-protected forest reserve. He showed the participants how our land-cover used to be: farm, forest reserve, and off-reserve forest patches in our surroundings provided access to non-timber forest products like mushrooms and snails without the need to go into the reserve forest. But currently this has been massively changed due to the expansion of cash crops. This has impacts on our environments and livelihoods, which shows the importance of paying attention to landscape management.

One participant said he used to see forest all over places but, over the years, forest has been replaced with oil palm plantations. He said, I know someone who has 240 acres of oil palm plantation so by aggregating individual oil palm farm sizes you can examine the extend of landscape changes through deforestation. We don't have land for food crop cultivation anymore, now we have to fell palm trees in order to get space for growing food crops.

Alhaji Bashir from GOPDC added that there has been a change in the landscape such that the farmers are cutting down their cocoa trees for oil palm plantations, because cocoa is not thriving well anymore. Also, the farmers don't have control over their cocoa as compared to oil palm, as government dictates the price of cocoa and cocoa is seasonal, whereas they can harvest their oil palm every two weeks. If the government doesn't buy the cocoa beans, the farmer cannot do anything about it. It is not surprising that cocoa farmer's fell their trees for galamsey, which doesn't occur in oil palm plantations.

Increased population also puts pressure on the landscape through farming.

Rev Atta Amponsah said, to him there is no food in the system and that it is not about cocoa or oil palm cultivation because the cocoa nor oil palm can make us become fully satisfied in terms of food.

Koomson from Pramkese said that the man from GOPDC has said it all because he works there and is doing his public relations work. He rather bets to differ because cocoa has a major role to play in the Ghanaian economy than oil palm. He is not discrediting oil palm because he is an oil palm farmer as well, but if there is anything to talk about; we should talk about the reduced nature of land cover brought about by illegal chainsaw operators, illegal mining and others that is really affecting their cocoa.

- Chainsaw operators
- Galamsey operation
- Slash and burn activities.

Kwabena then asked what are the impacts of these changes on you as a farmer, the FSD and others?

- Continuous application of weedicides without using alternative weed control such as weeding affects the landscape by killing the organisms which leads to low yields.
- No more bushmeat and some NTFPs are available for livelihoods including snails and mushroom.
- Less land available for food crops production. If you want to plant food crops you have to clear part of your cocoa or oil palm farm and replant and create spacing for food crops cultivation. This affects their incomes because not all the trees that they cut down are old.

- Increased population has reduced shifting and fallow cultivation. Farmers can no longer practice shifting cultivation because there are a lot of people in the family and everyone needs to make a farm. So eventually, they have to continuously farm on the land.
- Vincent Abolo from Pramkese attributed the landscape changes to the continuous research by research institutions and organizations like MoFA and others who came up with the chemicals, crop yield varieties, new planting systems and methods of farming.
- The District Planner said that the population will continue to increase unless deliberate efforts are put in place to control it as done by other countries. He said that we are beyond climate change interventions and are now looking at climate change adaptations, so he suggests agroforestry should be incorporated in our farming systems (economically viable trees should be intercropped)

Kwabena-How are/can farmers coping/cope with landscape changes?

- Samuel Tetteh thinks farmers should revisit their old/cultural farming practices.
- There is a need for additional livelihood activities like snail rearing (livelihood diversification).
- Stop using weedicides.
- Farmers should practice composting and mulching.

Third presentation: Principles and practical examples of a dynamic agroforestry system by Christian – Serendipalm

He gave a brief overview of his organization and further discussed the above topic by engaging the farmers actively with some answered questions. Some of the information he gave was:

1. Diversification of crops is good.
2. Too much of weedicide and spraying with chemicals is not good as it leads to reduced crop yields. There should rather be alternation of weeding. Planting of cocoa and palm oil is feasible and there has been research on. He advised the alternation with spraying chemicals and weeding to reduce impact on crop yields.
3. He encouraged the participants to practice agroforestry

INSTITUTIONAL DISCUSSIONS

Serendipam Company Limited-Christian Boahen Obeng

We are in collaboration with the Forestry Commission to implement tree planting. We train farmers to incorporate trees in their farming systems. We have introduced agroforestry recently and are working with our farmers. We train our farmers on good farming practices without the

application of chemicals to conserve the landscape. We actually practice organic farming as a company. We try to help farmers improve their yield so as to protect the ecosystem.

Forestry Commission-Prince Gabriel Osei Yeboah

The forest cover of Ghana has now dwindled from 8.2million hectares to 1.6 million hectares and this can be attributed the following factors:

1. Poor farming practices by virtue of clearing, cutting down trees and burning
2. Research has shown that there is 2% rate of degradation of the forest cover per annum by virtue of illegal mining, illegal logging and other causes.

Some interventions to landscape changes by forestry commission include:

1. Ongoing Forest Investment Project
2. Agroforestry
3. Modified Taungya system
4. Foreign collaboration like Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), Forest Investment Programme (FIP), Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and more.
5. Forestry collaboration with communities and farmers through tree planting exercise by providing them with trees.

MOFA-Anthony Nartey

He said his department used to be the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) but is now the Department of Agriculture ('Agric') under the District Assembly system. We are in charge of agriculture, including tree crops, food crops, livestock, fisheries and others in the district. We are into different activities as adaptations and coping strategies as far as landscape changes are concerned. We have climate smart agriculture where different varieties of crops and animals are introduced that require less water and are able to mature quicker. We also have livelihood diversification programmes where famers can combine food crops and tree crops with livestock, other animal rearing like snails and bees. Our main objectives are to

- Ensure food security,
- Enhance income-generating capacity of farmers,
- Educate farmers on alternative livelihoods.

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR –OPRI)- Dr. Isaac Danso

He works at OPRI and they do research on oil palm. Since the 1980s, farmers' plant cocoa and oil palm on separate land. However, research has now revealed that farmers can intercrop cocoa and oil palm but the oil palm should be planted four years before planting the cocoa under it. This provides enough shade for the young cocoa seedlings. There should also be adequate

spacing between the oil palm trees in order to accommodate the cocoa trees (planting space should be 33 feet triangular instead of 29 feet triangular in oil palm monoculture). He said farmers can have the same yield by just planting them separately. This helps to conserve land for other purposes without necessarily clearing all the forest around us.

Another coping strategy against climate change is the introduction of high drought-resistant oil palm planting material which is able to withstand drought and give the expected output.

They have also introduced high-yielding varieties of oil palm seedlings which is able to produce 22 tons per hectare as compared to the old seedlings used by farmers which produces only 4 tons per hectare. There is no need for expanding farm size if the farmer uses these varieties.

District Assembly-Mr. Providence

- The District Assembly helps in district development through quality service for livelihoods. The issue of illegal mining is worrisome and the District Assembly is collaborating with other NGOs and government to reduce this menace.
- The National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) and the national fire service train firefighting volunteers in how to deal with fire outbreaks.
- Collaborate with the Forestry Commission in providing trees species for planting by community members and school children.
- Collaborate with MOFA to train extension officers who intend to train farmers.
- Spatial development work with town and country planning to provide all landscape information and its management.

GOPDC-Alhaji Bashir Manu

GOPDC does the following with respect of landscape changes

- Ensures environmental and social impact assessment
- Certification with ISO and RSPO
- Provide good and sustainable planting material
- Sustainable environmental management (forest, community, and ecosystem)
- Largest employee in terms palm plantation in Ghana.
- GOPDC is the largest agro-industry in the country
- GOPDC is environmentally friendly
- There have biggest outgrower scheme in the country

COCOBOD-Mr. Solomon Koomson

COCOBOD has a lot of divisions and he works at the extension service division and they do the following as far as climate change and landscapes are concerned;

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- Treat diseased farms or replant old and diseased cocoa farms
- Offer extension services
- Provide alternative livelihoods such as rabbits
- Survey cocoa farms within the district to know characteristics of cocoa in the district for informed decision.
- Recommend 6 tree species per cocoa hectare
- Provide fertilizer and ammonia to the farmers for intensification and rehabilitation exercise
- Government was not used to giving compensation to cocoa farmers but due to the competition from oil palm and rubber they now provide compensation to the farmers in rehabilitation and replanting exercise including inputs and seedlings.

Anna-is there any institution or organization that we missed in discussing landscape changes that should have been among the panel?

The participants recommended to include the following organization in next learning platform

1. Chiefs/ pastors
2. Security personnel
3. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
4. Fire service

QUESTIONS

1. Why doesn't OPRI give free seedlings like COCOBOD does?
Alhaji Bashir responded that COCOBOD does not give seedlings for free, they have way of deductions and they make the farmers pay always. Nothing is really free.
2. I have registered trees in my farm but encounter challenges with the Forestry Commission
ANSWER. There are formalities to follow with Forestry Commission to allow you to cut your trees, also ecological factors are taken into consideration, farmers are not allowed cut trees close to river bodies.

OPRI

1. New seeds for high yields are available
2. Known the price of the seedlings, is 8 GHC and 80 pesewas for nuts.
3. Fire and drought-resistant seedlings are being used in Ghana.

COCOBOD

Q: After 30 years, how will the old or diseased farm be cut and what process is involved?

Answer: we do surveys, mark and check the diseased plants and replace with new varieties.

MOFA

There are not a lot of veterinary doctors and it seems their importance is really ignored. This is due to unemployment that is causing this issue of a lack of their existence. Some mechanisms are being put in place to cater for that purpose.

What implications for Learning Platform Goals?

Oral take home messages

- We have to continue next year because it will help us to learn a lot as we have done this year.
- I have learned that weedicide is not good for our lands. We can plant more crops and trees in one farm (agroforestry).
- Learned that we can interplant trees with oil palm.
- We can have access to workshop and acquisition of skills on local soap manufacturing for free.
- I heard about oil palm varieties that are resistant or resilient to climate change developed by OPRI and that they are available for farmers.
- I recommend further research to be done by OPRI on oil palm planted with trees to find out whether there is reduction in yield.
- Specific species of trees should be recommended by forestry Commission for planting in oil palm plantation
- The programme was very resourceful.
- I recommend broadening the horizon of the resource persons for next year to include personnel from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), fire service and others.
- I learned that the landscape is very important to human existence therefore, every effort is needed to protect the landscape.
- There is the need to replace every tree felled for any purpose.
- We should protect the landscape in order to benefit it through tree planting exercise.
- The platform is very important and there is the need to organize it next year.
- The communities should be well educated on the benefits of planting trees
- I recommend for the continuation of the programme next year.
- I recommend for the continuation of the programme next year but there should be a field visit to the various communities to find out whether they took up the ideas they learned.
- I have learned and understood what the institutions do and their programmes specifically for farmer.
- We take climate change seriously because it affects food security.
- Ghana Education Service should be invited to take part next in order to disseminate the information to the various schools
- The government should support the programme to benefit more farmers.

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- The learning platform should become an annual affair, GAABIC is willing to play a leading role.
- Landscape issues are collective issues which require collective adaptation of sustainable methods.
- There will be improvement in our lives because of the knowledge that we have acquired.
- I recommend for the continuation of the programme next year.
- I recommend that the innovation platform should be continued because if the farmers learn and practice what they learned, it will help to improve productivity.
- There is a need for diversification.
- I will help to improve gaps as an extension officer by educating the farmers.
- The programme has helped me to learn more about farming practices and how to use the land wisely by planting more crops on a small piece of land.
- What we want from you next year is more help from you.
- I now know that I can have additional livelihood sources to my livelihood activities through soap making.
- I learned about getting more benefits from the landscape and the need to protect the landscape.
- The learning platform should be organized again next year.
- I suggest that there should be a talk on family planning next year to reduce population increase and pressure on the landscape.
- Learned about the need to educate farmers on good agricultural practices that will enhance high productivity thereby improving the livelihood of the farmers
- NGOs should be invited next year to support us.
- I learned about the need to protect the environment in order not to degrade the landscape that cause climate change.
- The landscape can be protected through the application of good farming practices.
- The programme should be continued.
- The project should focus on more result-oriented programmes.
- The project is very educative and the identified innovations will help the participants
- I suggest that the traditional leaders and the security personnel must be included in next learning platforms.
- I suggest many stakeholders be included the learning platforms.
- I will not use chemicals on my land again.
- I have learned that protecting the landscape will help to gain more income from our farms
- Farm management should be discussed next year.
- I learned that the application of chemicals is not good for the land.
- I have learned a lot from this learning platform which will help me in my farming and livelihood activities. I think forest conservation should be key topic for discussion next year.

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- I have learned to practice mixed farming to protect the land.
- I learned that the landscape is changing in my district and it is my duty to plant more trees to save and protect the landscape.
- I liked the way the discussion went concerning cocoa.
- We should talk more about galamsey activities next year.
- I learned that we should protect our forest.
- I am really inspired by the innovations in soap making because I am a soap processor myself and I have learned to take it outside my town to earn more money.
- I suggest that there should be proper time management in our next learning platform.
- I now know that I own the trees that I plant in my cocoa farm.
- There is the need to care for the cocoa and oil palm farmers.
- I learnt that. I need diversification in my farm for my own benefit.
- There is the need to include the companies (oil palm) to assist in funding the learning platform.
- I learned that., the forest is ours and we must protect it
- The government must help the organisers for the learning platform to continue
- I found the day very productive and I am going to try the innovations.
- There is a need to come out with home-grown solutions towards addressing the changing landscape and its negative impacts.
- There is a need for the learning platform to be organized next year and I think the topic should be around population and changing landscape issues.
- I learned about tree planting exercise and addition of livelihood activities.
- I learned that we can intercrop oil palm with trees.
- I suggest that the learning platform be continued next year. More discussion should be held on agrochemicals.
- I think the programme should be continued next year because it will give opportunity to the participants to learn new things to improve management of the landscape.
- The local interventions (innovations) by farmers to solve their problems relating to the changing landscape have been very instructive.
- The platform was very good and has given me more insight into the changing landscape and how best to address them.
- I wish the programme will be continued next year.
- The programme is very educative and I have learned a lot. I am going to educate other farmers especially on mixed cropping on one field.
- I learned the chemicals (weedicides) that we apply on the farm are not good for the land. Therefore, it is not important to apply them again on my farm.
- We help financial assistance to establish our farms.
- I appeal that the organizers will give us some inputs for our farming activities next year.
- I learned that farming is a good thing and that we should do it well.

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- We look for support for our farming activities next year.
- Please, help us next year.
- I learned that we should reduce the application of weedicides on the land.

Closing remarks (Mirjam)

Prof. Mirjam ended the program by showing appreciation to all participants and stakeholders for a fruitful discussion.