



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

Project RISE

Rural Irrigation System for Ekumdipe

September 2011 Report



Obstacles to Replication

Since the last Project RISE update, our team has been hard at work and optimistic about a potential second harvest this summer. In March, the demonstration farmers from Bawku successfully produced dry-season crops on a large scale for the first time in Ekumdiye. **This was a major advance towards the goal of empowering local farmers in Ekumdiye to grow dry-season crops on their own.**

The pilot group of ten farmers, **Kano Egye Man (KEM)**, has yet to replicate this **success** because of a number of factors. The KEM members underestimated the intensity of labor and the amount of time required to nurse and harvest onions during the dry-season. While the Bawku farmers used seedlings nursed in Bawku from seeds ideal for dry-season farming, the KEM farmers were unable to due to a supply shortage; instead, **KEM tried to nurse onion seeds themselves, and were unsuccessful.**



The heavy rains, signaling the beginning of yam season, returned before KEM was able to transfer their seedlings from the nursery to the onion beds. Fortunately, these seeds were relatively inexpensive and our financial projections allowed for margin of error during the trial year, so **KEM is still capable of undertaking dry-season farming next month.**

Return of Key Partners

In this upcoming dry-season, **it will be useful to have our main liaison in Ekumdiye, Dan, back with us.** Due to severe illnesses of his wife and newborn child (who are now thankfully both doing well and recovering) Dan was not able to work during the past 2 months and his absence was a major communication and action hindrance. **His return will allow us to respond to future problems with seedlings, fertilizers, poor weather, and the other potential roadblocks to dry-season farming.** In addition to Dan's return, the Bawku farmers recently communicated to Dan that they are interested in returning to Ekumdiye as well if their transportation costs are covered.

A New Season




At the moment, there is no more planting until the dry season comes around in the next few weeks. This time, **KEM plans to start farming at the beginning of the dry season in late September/early October.** Since the KEM members are busy harvesting the crops from their personal farms (primarily yams and cassava), they have identified a young man who can tend the existing onion nursery. He is taking the role of the younger Bawku farmer, Joe, whose responsibility in the past was tending the nursery and who produced the previous dry-season harvest. Additionally, the **return of the Bawku farmers will be very instrumental to the success of the project.** This season, we will expect the KEM members to work *side-by-side* with the Bawku farmers. They will thus learn what the dry season farming entails from beginning to end, and hopefully will not need the Bawku farmers.

Currently...

KEM is attempting to sell the onions grown on the demonstration farm this past dry-season. Since transportation is a challenge in Ekumdiye, the farmers are relying on buyers coming to the village rather than transporting the onions to larger towns to sell. Storage is also a challenge, especially in the rainy season. The onions require constant drying and airing in the open to prevent rotting. The estimate for the sale of the onions, one and a half sacks is 150 Ghana cedis which is equivalent to 100 US Dollars. **We will explore options of transporting onions to larger markets and improving storage facilities, which could significantly enhance revenues.**

Looking to the Future



The KEM members remain committed to the project. Given the success of the demonstration farm, the farmers believe they can replicate that success this dry-season. With more time, knowledge, and resources, this dry-season has much promise. As they were unable to purchase seedlings last season, KEM has spent very little of their loan money and remain financially capable of investing in Project RISE without further financial assistance from ADI. For KEM, the difficult task will now be implementation and follow-through.

While the dry-season harvest earlier this year was a great step for Project RISE, the setback of the second harvest due to a shortage of seedlings was disappointing. Nonetheless, given the financial status of the project, our team is excited about the upcoming season. With lower anticipated costs, greater coordination between outside experts and the locals, and a more secure supply of input materials, our team is anxiously anticipating the initiation of Project RISE Phase III in September.



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