



Food Vendor Turns Main Supplier of Mangoes

Doris Tetteh was a food vendor – popularly known as a “chop bar” keeper in Ghana – for five years. In this job, she cooked local dishes for sale mostly to laborers working on building projects in the area. According to Doris, “For so many years, I operated a ‘chop bar’, but most people never paid for the food.”

Doris’ creditors took advantage of their familiarity with her and failed to pay. She could therefore not earn enough from the enterprise to support herself, four brothers, and her mother.

Doris then started cultivating corn to help provide the food needs of the family. Then USAID introduced its food security program in 1996, through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), into Trom community located in the Krobo area of Ghana’s Eastern Region. The program aims at improving farmers’ household access to food, shelter, education and health.

A survey conducted in the Krobo area identified improved varieties of mango and corn as suitable crops that could help improve incomes of poor rural farmers. To participate in the program, the farmer should have a low income and access to at least two acres of land. Doris was one of the 1,000 poor farmers selected in the area.



Photo: ADRA-Ghana

Doris Tetteh admires some mangoes on her farm.

The USAID program helped Doris and the other USAID-assisted farmers with forms of improved mango seedlings, corn seeds, and fertilizer. The farmers acquired skills in disease prevention and management, harvesting, post-harvest handling, and marketing. They were also trained in mango grafting, which enabled them to produce their own high yielding and early bearing plant materials.

Doris started with two acres of mangoes and intercropped it with corn for domestic use. She used the money from the sale of the extra corn harvested to expand the farm annually – she has acquired twenty-six acres of mangoes during the past six years. She also established a nursery to provide mango seedlings for sale to other farmers in the area. Doris harvests 200 tons of fresh mangoes a year, earning a gross income of \$100,000, and produces over 12,000 mango seedlings annually valued at \$18,000.

“I have acquired a tractor and leased land to expand my farm,” Doris said. “Now I have a reliable source of income and that has given me peace of mind.”

From the proceeds, Doris has purchased a pick-up truck for delivering the fruit to processing companies and customers. She has acquired a tractor for her farming operations which is hired out to other farmers when not in use. She has also begun diversifying into livestock farming with seventeen cattle and seventy sheep and goats.

Doris is now the main supplier of fresh mangoes and mango seedlings in the Krobo area. The remarkable improvements in the living standards of Doris and other USAID-assisted farmers have encouraged other farmers and organizations to establish large acreages on their own, making the Krobo district the most important mango producing area in Ghana.

