

Junior Scientists Tandems

Final Report

Name of student: Kwabena Buabeng

German Research Institution (GRI): Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF)

Supervisor at German Research Institution (IARC): Prof. Dr. agr. Stefan Sieber

National University (Country): N/A

Supervisor at National University: N/A

International Agricultural Research Center (Country): International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

Supervisor at IARC: Dr. Richard Asare

Start and end date of stay at IARC/ GRI: 1st February 2025-31st July, 2025

Title: Gender Perspectives on Climate Adaptation and Integrated Soil Fertility Management Practices in Cocoa Farming: Insights from Cocoa Farmers in Ghana

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My six-month stay at the **International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)** in Ghana was a valuable and enriching experience that gave me the opportunity to deepen my academic knowledge, gain practical fieldwork skills, and engage with local communities and experts working in agricultural development.

My proposed research was titled “Gender Perspectives on Climate Adaptation and Integrated Soil Fertility Management Practices in Cocoa Farming: Insights from cocoa farmers in Ghana”. My study was carried out in six cocoa-farming communities located in the Ashanti and Western North regions of Ghana. The research focused on exploring how gender influences the adoption and practice of ISFM as a strategy for climate adaptation. I conducted a series of interviews and focus group discussions with farmers, most of whom were women, in order to capture their perspectives, lived experiences, and coping strategies in climate adaptation and soil fertility management.

From the very beginning, I was warmly welcomed by my supervisor and colleagues at IITA. I held an initial meeting with my supervisor to align our expectations and establish a realistic timeline for the research activities, which provided a strong foundation for the months ahead. I worked under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Richard Asare, the lead Cocoa Scientist. Everyone at the institute was very friendly and very helpful whenever I needed any support. With their support, I was able to get in touch with some experienced enumerators from the institute who already have had the stint of working with farmers and collecting field data that helped with the fieldwork. I also got the approval to use the services of the driver from the institute as he is already knowledgeable in the travel routes of the cocoa growing areas in Ghana, all this made the fieldwork experience very successful and less stressful.

I was also very impressed with the enthusiasm of the farmers and the time they took off their busy schedules on the farm and other household duties to have the interviews. As a continuation of this work, I am currently preparing a research paper titled, “Integrated soil fertility management practices as a climate adaptation strategy: Insights from women cocoa farmers in the Ashanti and Western North regions of Ghana” highlighting the key findings of the study. In general, the women farmers exhibited a solid understanding of ISFM practices, integrating both traditional and modern methods.

Overall, my time at IITA was a rewarding journey of learning, collaboration, and growth. It not only allowed me to contribute to a meaningful research initiative but also strengthened my research skills and expanded my professional network. I leave this experience with a deeper understanding of the complexities of climate adaptation in cocoa farming and with a strong commitment to advancing gender equality and sustainability in agriculture

